

Revue de presse américaine

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



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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Jeudi 7 septembre, réalisation : Josselin Brémaud



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FRANCE – EUROPE

**The
New York
Times**

Bickerton : Emmanuel Macron Will Be Yet Another Failed French President (online)

Chris Bickerton
6-8 minutes

President Emmanuel Macron of France speaking at the Élysée Palace in Paris this week. Pool photo by Etienne Laurent

President Emmanuel Macron of France is liberalism's new poster boy. Hailed as the answer to Europe's populist tide, he has brought a buzz back into French diplomacy by facing down President Trump and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. "The Macron method," a leading European think tank [gushed recently](#), is the new Third Way,

threading the needle between technocracy and populism.

At home in France, it's a very different story. A [recent poll found](#) that Mr. Macron's popularity fell by 14 points in August, after a fall of 10 points in July. Only 40 percent of respondents said they were satisfied with the president's performance.

To be fair, Mr. Macron never had much popular support to begin with. In [the first round](#) of the presidential election in April, when the vote was split among four main contenders, he won just under 24 percent. (By comparison, François Hollande received 28 percent of the vote in the first round in 2012. Nicolas Sarkozy won 31 percent in 2007.)

Mr. Macron won the second round handily, but only because he was the lesser-evil candidate in the runoff — his competitor was Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right populist National Front party.

Electoral arithmetic explains only so much. Mr. Macron's popularity suffers from something more fundamental: Macronism. His entire political project has been far too focused on his personality. Much of his appeal has come from his youth, his dynamism, his good looks and his oratorical skills. This hyper-personalized approach always carried the risk that once his charm wore off, there would be nothing left for his supporters to like, which is exactly what is happening.

Since taking office, Mr. Macron has put off many people by trying to recapture the grandeur of the presidency. In a phrase that may stick to him for the rest of his time in office, he said he wanted to make the presidency more "Jupiterian," comparing himself with the powerful Roman god Jupiter, who ruled the skies. When he brought the Senate and Parliament together [at the Versailles palace](#) and spoke to them about his ambitions for the presidency, many in France bristled at the monarchical overtones.

This arrogant attitude about power has destroyed the anti-establishment, upstart image that

Mr. Macron cultivated during the campaign. The post-ideological platform on which he ran is starting to reveal itself for what it really is: an emptiness at the heart of his political project.

Mr. Macron's two big policy goals are fixing the economy and fixing Europe. He has gone so far as to describe his economic policies as a "[Copernican revolution](#)," but he is merely pushing France a little farther down the road of labor market deregulation and fiscal austerity, a path well trodden by other countries.

The new president says he is determined to make France a "start-up nation," borrowing the vapid parlance of Silicon Valley. This has won him the support of venture capitalists and tech billionaires but has yet to convince the wider French public. Silicon Valley's libertarian social contract, with its cavalier attitude toward inequality, sits uneasily with a population raised on France's postwar social-democratic traditions.

His main goal is to reduce France's unemployment rate, which at around 10 percent remains stubbornly high. He hopes to do this by [reforming the labor code](#). One of the [new measures](#) is a cap on the damages that courts can award workers claiming wrongful dismissal, a move intended to give employers more confidence in hiring. Another would

allow companies with fewer than 50 employees to negotiate contracts without having to go through trade unions. The French far left has called this a "[social coup d'état](#)," but the president has been careful not to give in entirely to the business lobby.

What really matters is the endpoint. Any sustained fall in unemployment in France would be welcome, but the experiences of other countries suggest it comes at the cost of new kinds of inequality. In Germany, labor market reforms have led to a proliferation of "mini-jobs," part-time work that is [lightly regulated](#) and has taken the place of full-time jobs in some sectors. In Britain's highly deregulated labor market, record employment levels exist alongside [low productivity, stagnating wages](#) and a proliferation of short-term contracts. Is this the future France wants?

Not since the economic boom of the 1950s and '60s has capitalism in Europe been dynamic enough to combine high levels of employment with long-term material gains for the masses. Today, choices involve painful trade-offs. Mr. Macron's economic policies favor employers over workers and chip away at what remains of the French welfare state.

But fearful of giving his program any actual political content, the president wraps up his reforms in the

European flag. He tells French voters that only if they make these sacrifices at home, the rest of the European Union — especially Germany — will take them seriously and give France a better deal.

Mr. Macron's European plans include a common budget and finance minister for the eurozone. His ideas have received warm words from Berlin, and there are signs that such a deal could be possible after Germany has its federal elections on Sept. 25. But if Chancellor Angela Merkel wins, her mandate will not be for a European fiscal union where German tax revenues are placed in a common European pot. She has given her support to only a very modest version of what Mr. Macron is proposing. The payoff for all of France's sacrifice at home will be small — and the president will surely be no more popular than he is now.

Mr. Macron's success in June's presidential election has shaken up the moribund political landscape in a deep and lasting way. For that, he deserves thanks. But as a political project, Macronism is little more than rhetoric and hubris, backed up with conventional neoliberal policies. For now, Mr. Macron is still the darling of the global liberal elite, but his growing unpopularity gives us a better picture of what he has to offer.

CBS News : Macron's Popularity Slumps to a New Low

By Fayçal Benhassain | September 7, 2017 | 12:16 AM EDT

4-6 minutes

French President Emmanuel Macron. (Photo: Élysée Palace)

Paris (CNSNews.com) – Less than four months after taking office French President Emmanuel Macron's popularity has slumped dramatically according to polls, and is now languishing at 30 percent, prompting French media outlets to note that even President Trump is faring better in surveys in the U.S.

According to a YouGov France poll conducted at the end of August, only five percent of respondents said they were very happy with Macron's performance.

In an interview with a weekly magazine last week, the president acknowledged that French voters were not happy with him and his government. His prime minister, Édouard Philippe, also saw his popularity rating drop from 55 points last month to 46.

Experts and commentators attribute the slide to Macron's plans to reform

the country's labor code and slow pace in introducing laws, in particular efforts to slow growing unemployment.

A survey conducted at the end of August found that nearly two out of three respondents (63 percent) do not trust Macron and his government to reform the labor code.

All labor unions are against the reforms. Among the more unpopular proposals are one making it easier for employers to hire and fire workers, in order to "free up the energy of workforce."

Currently, there is no limit to the amount a court may order an employer to pay out an employee who loses his or her job, but Macron is proposing a limit of three months' for employees more than two years on the job, and up to 20 months' salary for those with 30 years of employment.

Overall, Macron argues that he wants to encourage entrepreneurship and introduce greater flexibility.

Frédéric Saint-Clair, a political scientist, said the proposals to

reform the code are contributing to Macron's poor poll showing because of a poor communication strategy in particular.

He added that French people are also impatient about the changes promised by Macron during his campaign and after his election.

"This fall is accentuated by the way Macron is exercising power, which the majority of the population does not accept anymore," Saint-Clair said.

The way Macron communicates has had a negative impact on his popularity, he said. The president has given no interviews since July and was largely absent in the media throughout the month of August.

He popped up in reports about him playing soccer with a club, filing a complaint against a reporter who published pictures of his family while on holidays in Marseille, and discussing his wife's official role as the first lady.

Bruno Cautres, researcher in political science, recalled that Macron said numerous times while campaigning that if elected he would change the country in five years. His

government has announced budget cuts and housing subsidies for students, but many are concerned he will follow an austerity policy.

Cautres said the proposed changes to the labor code look "messy" for many voters, with some struggling to understand the direction in which the government is going.

Another setback came last July when Macron accepted the resignation of the armed forces chief of staff, who opposed defense spending cuts.

Saint-Clair said Macron's fall in the polls is accentuated by "his way of exercising power, to which the majority of the population does not adhere."

During a trip to Romania last month, Macron said in a speech that the French people "hate reforms," a comment that drew sharply negative reactions on social media here.

Other observers say Macron's reliance on Twitter and "meaningless" public appearances are not helping French people to understand what he is doing to improve their daily lives.

"Some people begin to feel they are dealing with a great seducer and an outstanding communicator, but one whose Hollywood-like communication is only an instrument in the service of a policy of

austerity," said Jerome Fourquet, political scientist at the Paris-based polling and market research firm IFOP.

Government spokesman François Castanier has indicated that Macron

plans to address the French people soon, but gave no details.

In the U.S., the Gallup daily presidential poll on Tuesday had 56 percent of Americans disapproving

of the job President Trump is doing and 37 percent approving.

The Rasmussen Reports daily tracking poll for Wednesday showed 45 percent approval by likely U.S. voters and 53 percent disapproval.

**The
Washington
Times**

Emmanuel Macron, French president, takes on labor laws with 30 percent approval rating

The Washington Times
<http://www.washingtontimes.com>

8-10 minutes

PARIS — In a risky move, President [Emmanuel Macron](#) is seeking a political second wind by taking on the third rail of French politics.

Faced with plummeting polls and a string of public embarrassments just four months after his stunning electoral win, the 39-year-old president is facing a critical early test this month as he rolls out reforms to [France's](#) notoriously rigid labor laws in a bid to reinvigorate the country's economy.

Even backed by a massive majority in the national parliament, it's a fraught move in a country that boasts a powerful labor movement and one that, as [Mr. Macron](#) recently observed, "hates reform."

A former investment banker whose new Republic on the Move political movement swept aside [France's](#) traditional left and right parties in May, [Mr. Macron](#) and his supporters say French labor laws — the 3,000-page Code du Travail — inhibit flexibility and stifle innovation, hindering [France](#) in the battle to create new businesses and stay competitive internationally. A former investment banker, [Mr. Macron](#) argues that an overhaul of generous employment and benefit mandates is essential to upholding his campaign pledge to cut the unemployment rate to 7 percent from 9.5 percent by 2022.

But the honeymoon for the political newcomer has been brutally brief, cut short in part by self-inflicted wounds.

A YouGov poll released this week for the HuffPost and CNews put [Mr. Macron's](#) job performance approval at an all-time low of 30 percent — lower than President Trump's.

[Mr. Macron](#) has been hurt by a fight over spending cuts to student stipends, the resignation of [France's](#) top military officer over feared budget cuts, and damaging personal revelations, including his spending of \$31,000 on makeup in his first three months in office. Edouard Philippe, the conservative prime

minister whom [Mr. Macron](#) picked to broaden the centrist appeal of his government, is getting equally dismal poll ratings.

A separate Ifop poll for Dimanche Ouest France over the weekend found that just 10 percent of French voters now think [Mr. Macron](#) will be able to successfully transform [France](#) by the end of his five-year term.

Like Mr. Trump, [Mr. Macron](#) has dismissed the negative reviews of his first 100 days in office, and again like Mr. Trump, he has lashed out at what he sees as unfair coverage from the press.

"Journalists have a problem," he said this week amid criticism that he has been aloof from the press and ducked hard questions about his record. "They are too interested in themselves and not enough in the country. Let's talk about the French people."

The president also argues that bad poll numbers reflect the scope of his ambitious reform program.

"I'll have to live with people's impatience for the next few months," [Mr. Macron](#) told the weekly magazine Le Point on Wednesday, calling the poor reports in the press irrelevant.

Labor pains

The polls do give [Mr. Macron](#) credit for trying to honor a central promise: to improve [France's](#) international competitiveness through an overhaul of labor laws in the land of the 35-hour workweek.

"It used to be one company for a lifetime, so signing that one contract was important," said Nathan Skrzypczak, a 26-year-old technical manager at a digital business marketing startup. "But now there are many more people working in small companies. The old ways no longer work. We need reforms to adapt to the rules and the frameworks of how it's done today."

But that openness — especially among younger French citizens — clashes with a deep-rooted tradition of the state guaranteeing generous protections to workers.

"The gamble today is for the country to adapt itself to the technological

and economic realities of modern days without necessarily altering the philosophy of the French social system," said [Paris](#)-based political commentator Pierre Haski. "For a long time, French people didn't want to change anything if it meant they would have to renege on a social system to which they are greatly attached."

But, after years of near-stagnant economic growth, an Odoxa opinion poll has found that 56 percent of French citizens now agree that reform is necessary.

After a major buildup, Mr. Philippe announced the plan last week. "Our goal is simple," the prime minister said. "It aims to favor job creation by giving more security and visibility to entrepreneurs in their decision to hire, more guarantees to employees."

The proposed measures include capping damages awarded by employment tribunals in cases of unfair dismissal, increasing severance packages by 25 percent and letting businesses with fewer than 50 employees — 95 percent of French firms — lay off workers without the input of labor union representatives. Current law requires that input.

The reforms are also expected to give businesses greater power to negotiate working conditions, bonuses and vacations individually rather than accept a standard imposed throughout a given industry.

"I think it's all going in the right direction. It's all positive and clever," said Francis Becard, 57, head of the School of Business and Management in Troyes, east of [Paris](#). "Companies should be allowed to negotiate internally with employees. I think it's right."

But unions have repeatedly derailed attempts to reform [France's](#) labor market.

[Mr. Macron](#) included powerful unions in drafting the new rules, making concessions in some areas and maintaining a tough line in others. His tactics led two of the country's largest unions not to oppose the rules.

Anne Marie Dupont, a 65-year-old retired aeronautics worker and

member of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor union, said [Mr. Macron](#) avoided reforms that would have galvanized her to take to the streets in protest.

"We were so fearful of a revolution," she said. "They are changes, but they are not so revolutionary. It's not as bad as we thought."

Protests planned

Despite his early stumbles, [Mr. Macron's](#) new political party and its allies have a cushion after winning a strong majority of seats in parliamentary elections in June. Those lawmakers have given the president approval to make the reforms via executive orders to avoid lengthy parliamentary debates that might undermine the changes. Those orders are expected to come into effect at the end of the month.

But not all labor unions are on board with the reforms. Dissidents are planning two days of potentially disruptive protests starting Tuesday.

"It's the end of the employment contract," said Philippe Martinez, secretary-general of the General Confederation of Labor. "The employment contract no longer exists."

Leftist lawmaker Jean-Luc Melenchon, who ran against [Mr. Macron](#) for president, also urged citizens to take to the streets of [Paris](#) on Sept. 23 to protest the pro-business reforms he called a "social coup d'etat."

Many Parisians agreed with those sentiments.

"These reforms are just addressed to industrialists. We get the feeling it's not about us," said Alex, a [Paris](#) street market vendor selling socks. "I believe that the people from below are not involved with what's happening up there. Those from above make decisions for those below."

With labor divided, however, [Mr. Macron](#) looks poised to take credit for changes that other French leaders have failed to achieve, Mr. Haski said.

"What is certain today is that [France](#) has broken off with 10 or more years of failed politics where it has been unable to reform itself, to embrace

the digital revolution, to understand the new international balance of power," the commentator said. "For the first time, we have a president

who has a fine understanding of the new economic stakes."

[Paris](#) Deputy Pacome Rupin, a Republic on the Move member, said [Mr. Macron's](#) success has been

marrying economic foresight with the political savvy to get the job done.

"It's a matter of method," he said. "When people feel respected and

trusted, when they are informed, it works. This is the major change from the previous governments."



French Voters May Be Souring on Macron, But He's All They've Got

@gviscusi More stories by

Gregory Viscusi

7-9 minutes

By

September 7, 2017, 12:00 AM EDT
September 7, 2017, 4:26 AM EDT

- Opposition parties, unions in disarray as Macron pushes ahead
- President backed by commanding majority in National Assembly

Emmanuel Macron's poll numbers have been tumbling all summer. But it may not be enough to throw France's 39-year-old president off track just yet.

Macron still has a solid majority in the National Assembly and doesn't even face local elections for several years. Meanwhile, the economy is recovering, the unions are divided and his parliamentary opposition is in tatters.

That's still a solid platform for Macron's plans to remake France and the euro area over the next five years. Macron will outline some of his ideas on a state visit to Greece Thursday in a speech on the Pnyx, a hill opposite the Acropolis which was the heart of ancient Athenian democracy.

"I don't think Macron needs to be overly concerned," said Rainbow Murray, a reader in politics at Queen Mary University of London. "The lack of an opposition is a particular element in his favor at the moment. And, with a loyal parliamentary majority, he can afford to dig in his heels a bit."

Macron has already embarked on a wide-ranging plan to revive the

The New York Times

Press

3 minutes

By Associated Press September 7 at 6:16 AM

ATHENS, Greece — French President Emmanuel Macron arrived

economy with a labor-market liberalization due to come into force this month. He's also proposed business-friendly tax cuts, a reform of job-training schemes and support for entrepreneurs in a bid to prove to skeptical Germans that France is a reliable partner for deeper European integration.

By showing France can reform and revive its economy, Macron hopes to bring Germany around to accepting moves that could include a common budget and a "finance ministry" under democratic oversight. In an interview with Athens-based newspaper Kathimerini Thursday, he said it was in everyone's interest to inject more democratic supervision into the euro zone to correct its dysfunctions.

Steep Decline

All the same, the slide in the president's numbers since his election in May has been steep. His approval rating in September was 41 percent, according to Kantar Sofres, down 13 points in two months. YouGov put him as low as 30 percent. At this stage in their presidencies, Francois Hollande was at 50 percent and Nicolas Sarkozy at 64 percent, though they both ended up going way lower.

Macron's popularity was hit by a public spat over military spending that led France's top general to quit, a poorly prepared cut to a popular housing subsidy, and back-and-forth discussions about giving his wife Brigitte an official status. His taste for presidential pomp has also upset some, whether that's hosting Vladimir Putin at the Chateau de Versailles, taking Donald Trump for dinner at the Eiffel Tower, or indeed, aligning himself with the ancient-Greek leaders who laid the foundations of western civilization.

But pollsters say the decline may also reflect a return to a more

natural level for a president who won just 24 percent support of a deeply divided electorate in the first round of the election.

'Angry Country'

"Even if France elected a liberal pro-European as president, it remains a very angry country," said Emmanuel Riviere, managing director of Kantar France.

The president's challenge is to win round those angry voters before he has to face re-election in 2022, and with 360 of the 577 seats in the National Assembly he has full powers to implement his plans. Parliament has already passed new anti-terrorist powers for French police and gave Macron's government the power to rewrite France's labor law by decree.

The labor-law overhaul has divided France's three main unions. The CFDT and Force Ouvriere have refused to join a Sept. 12 protest organized by the CGT. The Socialist Party says it supports the CGT's opposition to the labor laws, but won't call on its members to join the protests.

The split among organized labor is mirrored in parliament. The biggest opposition group, led by former President Sarkozy's Republicans, won 135 seats in June's legislative election but 35 so-called constructives instantly split off to offer conditional support for Macron. The party is preparing to expel the rebels, as well as members such as Prime Minister Edouard Philippe and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire who joined Macron's cabinet.

No Competition

The Socialists and their allies fell to 31 seats from about 270 and various party leaders are toying with creating new political movements. National Front leader Marine Le Pen has fallen silent as she seeks to

contain a party rebellion over her poor showing in the second round of the presidential election.

Several opposition leaders have simply given up. Henri Guaino, once a close ally of Sarkozy, now has a radio show. Jean-Pierre Raffarin, a prime minister under Sarkozy, has joined France2 television. Others have had to find more ingenious ways to oppose Macron.

The only opposition party that's united is presidential candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon's France Unbowed, which is organizing its own protest against the labor law on Sept. 23. But Melenchon's challenge to Macron is built on just 17 seats.

"He has no competition," Riviere said. "The Republicans and the Socialists are deeply divided, and Le Pen is nowhere to be seen. Melenchon is the most credible opponent, but it's very unlikely that any Macron voters will defect to him."

Macron, who at the end of August toured Austria, Romania and Bulgaria, is using his trip to Greece not only to push his vision of greater integration of the euro zone, but also to show support for Greece's fledgling economic revival. He's bringing about 40 chief executive officers to encourage investment in the country, which is due to exit debt support programs next year. Besides the evening address at the Pnyx, Macron will hold a joint press conference with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras.

Before it's here, it's on the Bloomberg Terminal. [LEARN MORE](#)

France's Macron to outline EU vision as he arrives in Greece

By Associated

Press in Greece Thursday for the start of a two-day visit expected to focus on European affairs and Greece's financial crisis.

Security is tight for the visit, with Greek authorities banning protests through a large part of central Athens and mobilizing more than 2,000 police on the capital's streets.

Macron, who arrived with a sizeable delegation of French business leaders, was due to head to a meeting with Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos before holding talks with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and speaking at a joint news conference. He was to deliver a speech Thursday evening at the Pnyx, a symbol of ancient Athenian democracy.

Greece considers France a vital ally and counterweight to fiscally hawkish Germany in its efforts to ease the stringent terms of its international bailouts. The country has relied on international rescue loans since 2010, and in return has seen its economy put under strict supervision by its creditors. Successive governments have had to enforce radical fiscal and

structural reforms, including pension cuts and repeated tax hikes, in order to qualify for the loans.

Government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos hailed the visit as a sign that Greece had finally turned the page and had emerged from its deep financial crisis.

The future of the European Union will top the agenda of talks in

Athens, Tzanakopoulos said, adding that his choice of starting "the discussion for the future of Europe" during a visit to Greece "shows that we are at the end of a difficult course."

Talks during Macron's visit will also focus on French investments in Greece, and the progress of Greece's reforms and the rest of its

bailout, which officially finishes in mid-2018.

Despite heavy policing for the visit, youths managed overnight to throw paint at the entrance of the French Institute in the city center before escaping on motorcycles. The building has been repeatedly targeted by anarchist arsonists protesting French policies.

Last year, a French embassy police guard was slightly injured by a hand-grenade.

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French Company Rejects Kenyan Opposition Claims on Vote System

September 7, 2017, 5:53 AM EDT

- Kenyan court annulled results of Aug. 8 election last week
- OT-Morpho says system it supplied wasn't tampered with

French digital-security company OT-Morpho denied its systems used in Kenya's annulled elections last month were tampered with and said it's handed over all data for analysis by the country's Supreme Court.

"The system deployed in the delivery of the results employs

proven technologies that we've used in elections in other countries," Olivier Charlanes, director for Africa and the Middle East at OT-Morpho, said in an emailed statement. "The system used in Kenya wasn't pirated. It wasn't an attempt to interfere, and we've passed on all the logs to be analyzed by experts commissioned by the Supreme Court."

The Kenyan court on Sept. 1 canceled the result of last month's presidential election, the first such ruling in Africa, and ordered a new ballot to be held. The Oct. 17 rerun has increased uncertainty in East Africa's biggest economy as it

clouds the outlook for the country, where growth is already slowing.

Opposition candidate Raila Odinga's five-party alliance has urged the French government to investigate Paris-based Safran SA and its relations with electoral officials who "may have acted in complicity and connived to undermine the will of the people of Kenya." Safran sold its digital-security unit in May to Advent International, owner of Colombes, France-based Oberthur Technologies SA, and the renamed company is called OT-Morpho.

Odinga's alliance said the system used in the vote violated the country's electoral laws by "failing to

comply with the prescribed format of result management data." It also said the system provided for the "transmission of text messages that could be manipulated and were not backed by the primary statutory election result declaration forms."

OT-Morpho is awaiting the written judgment of the Supreme Court's ruling, which Kenyan Chief Justice David Maraga said will be released within 21 days of its decision.

Odinga has demanded the electoral commission be overhauled and said he wants guarantees on fairness before his alliance agrees to participate in the rerun.



In anti-establishment era, German youth opt for status quo: Angela Merkel

The Christian Science Monitor

8-10 minutes

September 6, 2017 Berlin—In Iceland, it's the Pirate Party. In Spain, it's left-wing Podemos. In France, the communist-backed "La France Insoumise." Across Europe, the anti-establishment parties noisily demanding radical political change are the ones attracting the youth vote.

Until you get to Germany, at least. There, youth are largely lining up behind the country's center-right, three-term, 63-year-old chancellor as the country heads toward federal elections Sept. 24.

And unlike many of their rebellious European peers, German youths say it is precisely Angela Merkel's promise to maintain the status quo that earns her their vote.

Ms. Merkel's secure position, with her party polling comfortably ahead of all her rivals, is partly due to the turbulent state of affairs today. From the unpredictable pronouncements made by President Trump, to the missiles launched by North Korea's Kim Jong-un, to the terrorist threat closer to home, many young German voters, like older ones, believe Merkel's steady hand is

precisely what the world needs right now.

But experts also believe youths, faring well in Germany compared to their European Union peers, are generally more conservative today than in the past. And the pro-EU Merkel herself has made conservatism more palatable, by adopting policies on the left that have blurred political ideology.

A supporter of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, a top candidate of the Christian Democratic Union Party (CDU) for the upcoming general elections, holds posters reading "For one Germany in which we will love to live and live well" before an election rally in Torgau, Germany, Sept. 6, 2017.

Vanessa Grothe, who is completing her masters in North American studies in Berlin, says that while many in her circle of friends vote on the left, she has joined the youth wing of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU). "What Merkel does very well: She stands for stability. And I think that is simply important for many people," she says in a cafe in the hip Berlin neighborhood of Kreuzberg. "Not just to make a wishy-washy policy, but a stable one."

No desire for change

In a survey by the German polling firm Forsa in June, 57 percent of first-time voters said they back Merkel as chancellor. Only 21 percent preferred her main rival, Martin Schulz of the Social Democratic Party (SPD).

Germans youths have it comparatively better than those around the continent. With its vaunted apprenticeship program and strong economy, Germany has the lowest youth unemployment in the EU, at 6.7 percent, compared with France at 21.6 percent or southern countries such as Greece, which has the highest rate at 46.6 percent. So Merkel's promise to keep things the same resonates. "Merkel is telling them, 'You can trust me. I'll secure your life,'" says Gero Neugebauer, a political scientist at Berlin's Free University.

Compare this with attitudes in France. Ultimately it was Emmanuel Macron who prevailed in May's presidential runoff election in France, winning two-thirds of first-time voters (mirroring overall results), but that support level can be deceiving. Heading into the first round, it was the right-wing Marine Le Pen of the National Front and Jean-Luc Mélenchon of the left-wing "La France Insoumise" who won more than 50 percent of first-time voters.

In a YouGov poll this year that surveyed the values of European youths, it was only in Germany that the polling agency found a majority of young people satisfied with their government. Eighty-seven percent of Greek youths, for example, are dissatisfied with theirs.

"Younger voters usually tend to vote for rather left-wing parties or left-wing candidates, whereas in Germany we have quite the opposite phenomenon," says Peter Matuschek, head of political and social research at Forsa. He says it has something to do with the long incumbency of Merkel — first-time voters don't know anyone else. But also, he says, "there is not really a longing, neither in the electorate as a whole nor among younger voters, for fundamental change. We have not this feeling, which would help the opposition parties, that we really need a turnaround."

Fluid policy

Of course not all German youths want things to say the same — or want Merkel for another term in office. In the east especially, many are voting for the left and far left. It is there also where the far-right Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) has gained the most traction, both because of Merkel's 'open door' refugee policy at the height of the

crisis in 2015 and much higher unemployment. Mandy Marx, a 23-year-old mother shopping at a Lidl discount store in the town of Merseburg, says she will not be voting for Merkel. "She's spent billions of euros for refugees but we can't even get teachers here!"

But elsewhere youths rallied around the humanitarian stance on refugees coming from the center-right. In fact, Merkel's policies have often crossed ideological lines, making it harder for her competitors to differentiate themselves. Mr. Schulz, for example, enjoyed a bounce when he first announced his candidacy in January, but it quickly fizzled.

Since then Merkel supported a law allowing same-sex marriage, which Schulz had thrown his support behind. Merkel also took the wind out of the sails of the Greens, when she announced plans to end Germany's dependence on nuclear energy in the wake of the Fukushima meltdown in 2011. This

stymies her opponents – some have increasingly argued she is damaging democracy by muting debate, including during the one between Merkel and Schulz on Sunday night.

Yet her policies make it easier for those across the political spectrum to support her. "I think that Merkel stands for sort of a soft conservatism that is much more accessible to a lot of young people than the Christian Democrats and their conservatism in the past," says Joerg Forbrig, a transatlantic fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the US in Berlin. "If I go back 20 years to the time I was a first time voter the Christian Democrats were sort of more hard-line conservatives at the time and with it a lot less appealing to young people."

'We do not need rock stars'

She's still more popular among older people. According to a recent Pew Research Center survey, 87 percent of respondents over age 50 said

they trust Merkel to do the "right thing" regarding world affairs, while for the 18-29 percent group it was 73 percent. For all those Germans who applaud Merkel's European policies, she angered many young leftists with hard-line austerity placed on Greece. Youth unemployment is low but many new jobs are so-called "mini jobs," far from the quality standards enjoyed by the older generation.

Ulrich Schneekloth, senior director at Kantar Public in Germany, says that while it is true that Merkel is trusted among young Germans more so than Schulz, whom so many young people feel is unknown, her party itself is not their party of choice. For that reason he says it's not a given where the youth vote will go Sept. 24.

Merkel seems not to be taking these vulnerabilities for granted, especially as one poll in late August showed nearly half of German voters still undecided. Merkel has sought to

woo young people, campaigning at a computer-gaming convention last month for example, and doing a live YouTube interview where she revealed that her favorite emoji is the smiley face – with a heart emoji added too on particularly good days. It's unlikely these kinds of moves will change perceptions of Merkel among young Germans. A poll by the German arm of YouGov in July among teens showed that many found her "far away from young people," and "boring."

But that's just fine, says Ms. Grothe. "Politics should not be about entertainment, as it has now become more or less in the US," she says. "We do not need rock stars in politics. This is the responsibility of the entertainment industry."

• Sara Miller Llana reported from Paris. Isabelle de Pommereau contributed reporting from Merseburg.



E.U. Countries Must Accept Their Share of Migrants, Court Rules

James Kanter
7-9 minutes

Migrants in Serbia in 2015, after the border was blocked by the Hungarian border police. Sergey Ponomarev for The New York Times

BRUSSELS — The European Union won an important victory on Wednesday in its fractured effort to deal with the huge wave of migration that began in 2015, as the bloc's top court ruled that Hungary and Slovakia were obligated to accept migrants under a contentious quota system.

A [summary of the judgment](#) said the Court of Justice had dismissed "in their entirety the actions brought by Slovakia and Hungary." The quota program was "necessary to respond effectively and swiftly to an emergency situation characterized by a sudden inflow of displaced persons," the court said.

The case has highlighted [a deep divide in the European Union](#) as it has sought a joint solution to dealing with the more than one million people who have come to Europe in the past two years, straining resources, roiling politics and drawing criticism from rights advocates who say that the bloc risks violating international laws on the treatment of refugees.

Many member states were lukewarm toward [the quota plan](#) from the start, but Hungary and Slovakia stood out by openly spurning their quota requirements

and trying to overturn them. A looming question is whether the European Commission, the bloc's administrative arm, will renew the relocation program.

"Given the tense politics of internal solidarity, it might make more sense for the commission to avoid insisting on the commitment, having made its point," said Elizabeth Collett, the European director of the Migration Policy Institute, a research organization. "Few E.U. member states have actually met their relocation quota, and most were just a lot more passive about it."

The 2015 program to relocate migrants traveling through Greece and Italy to other countries was put into place as the crisis of [migration from Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere](#) reached its peak, but only about a third of nearly 100,000 places have been filled.

Migrants waited in August to be rescued in the Mediterranean Sea. Angelos Tzortzinis/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Huge numbers of migrants arriving in Greece and Italy have made journeys to countries like Germany and Sweden; arrivals have slowed since the program's inception, and not all migrants in Greece and Italy qualify for relocation.

More than one million migrants have [applied for asylum in Germany](#), whose foreign minister, Sigmar Gabriel, welcomed the ruling on Wednesday as "explicitly clear," emphasizing that all European Union members would now be

expected to accept their quota of refugees.

"I have always told our Eastern European partners that it is correct to put questions to the courts," Mr. Gabriel said. "But now we can also expect that all European partners will uphold the ruling and the carry out the decision without further delay."

[Hungary](#) could be ordered to pay fines if it fails to take in its quota of 1,294 people, though [enforcement](#) might require the European Commission to bring its own court case.

Poland and the Czech Republic may face similar legal action, but [Slovakia](#) has accepted a small number of migrants relocated from Greece and has recently shown a greater willingness to find common ground with Brussels.

Peter Szijarto, the Hungarian minister of foreign affairs and trade, called the ruling "outrageous and irresponsible" and said "the real battle is only just beginning," insisting that no one would be relocated to Hungary against its wishes.

The quota system was introduced as part of an effort to relieve the burden on Greece and Italy, where migrants — many of them fleeing the war in Syria — reached the European Union in huge numbers in 2015 and 2016. But the bloc soon faced intense opposition from member states in Central and Eastern Europe that resented any obligation to accept a preset number

of migrants arriving in Greece and Italy.

The program formally ends Sept. 26, but migrants arriving in European Union states until that date can qualify. According to estimates by European officials, about 22,000 people who have arrived, or who are expected to arrive in Greece and Italy before the September deadline, could be eligible for relocation. But only about half of them are likely to qualify for relocation to another member state, where then they could apply for asylum, officials said.

Ms. Collett said Europe's leaders were increasingly focused on an effort to stop migrants from trying to get to Europe in the first place. That entailed closer "relationships with key third countries like Niger and Libya, or simply providing cash to encourage governments to limit flows," she said, referring to funding for programs like job creation and for security measures to keep migrants from attempting the hazardous trip to Europe.

Elements of that approach have enraged Oxfam, a charity that [warned the European Union](#) last month that migration policies preventing people from leaving Libya exposed them to torture, rape and slavery.

In March 2016, the European Union reached [a deal with Turkey](#) to send back asylum seekers who had taken clandestine routes to Greece from Turkey. That measure, including payments of up to 6 billion euros, or \$7.1 billion, to help Turkey manage its refugee population and a pledge

to reinvigorate talks on the possibility of Turkey joining the bloc, slowed the flow across the Aegean route to a trickle.

That deal is looking increasingly tenuous, and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany called last

weekend for an end to negotiations with Turkey, infuriating Ankara. Since the original agreement with Turkey, the focus has been on the so-called Central Mediterranean route used by many migrants to travel from Libya to Italy.

According to the [International Organization for Migration](#), 125,860 migrants and refugees have arrived in Europe by sea so far this year. Nearly 80 percent arrived in Italy, with the rest divided among Cyprus, Greece and Spain. More than 2,500

people have died trying to cross the Mediterranean, the group said.

That number of arrivals is less than half the number registered in the same period last year, when 3,238 died at sea.



Cowen : Europe's Muslims Are More Integrated Than You Think

Tyler Cowen
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More stories by Tyler Cowen

7-9 minutes

Immigration

Angela Merkel's much-criticized bet proved correct: Germany, and other countries, can integrate Muslim migrants.

by

September 7, 2017, 4:49 AM EDT

Muslim and German.

Photographer: OLIVER BERG/AFP/Getty Images

Debates over immigration are fraught with misconceptions. One of the most common is that the integration of Muslims into Western Europe societies has gone very badly, in large part because terror attacks loom so large in the news. Those attacks are a very real problem, yet they do not reflect the typical reality. A new [study](#) from the Bertelsmann Stiftung in Germany shows that Muslim integration in Europe is in fact proceeding at a reasonable pace.

The survey included more than 1,000 Muslims in Germany and about 500 in Austria, France, Switzerland and the U.K. (both immigrants and children of immigrants were included, though not recent refugees). Although this is [hardly](#) the first study of its kind, the results offer considerable hope

for societies facing integration challenges: The stereotype of an uneducated, unemployed, easily radicalized Muslim migrant does not fit the facts.

The first sign of integration is language skill. About three-quarters of the Muslims born in Germany report German as their first language; 46 percent of foreign-born Muslims do. Overall, language skills improve with each generation, and migrants seem to be resourceful in finding ways to learn an adopted country's tongue. Muslims immigrants to France and the U.K. often arrive knowing the languages of their new countries.

Only about one in 10 French Muslims report leaving school before age 17; the American high school graduation rate for all attendees is lower, at [83 percent](#). In Germany, employment for Muslim immigrants is on a par with employment for non-Muslims, though Muslim wages are lower. The rate of unemployment for French Muslims is a disappointing 14 percent, but that looks less troubling when you consider that migrants are relatively young and French youth unemployment as a whole is about [25 percent](#). Labor market reforms and better economies can help integrate foreign migrants, and Europe is currently [showing](#) decent economic growth, again reasons for hope.

Nor do Muslims huddle in Muslim-only communities, apart from the broader population. Some 87 percent of Swiss Muslims report

having frequent or very frequent social contact with non-Muslims. In both Germany and France that number is 78 percent, again a sign of assimilation. It is lower in the U.K. (68 percent) and Austria (62 percent), but even those figures show plenty of social intermingling. And migrants across countries report feeling a close connection to the countries they live in, from a high of 98 percent (Switzerland) to a low of 88 percent (Austria).

By no means is religion always a dominant influence on Muslims in Western Europe. The U.K. is the only country of the five where a majority of Muslims report staying highly religious after their migrations. Only 26 percent of Swiss Muslims report being highly religious, barely higher than the 23 percent of Swiss residents as a whole who count themselves to be highly religious. A majority of Swiss Muslims are from Southeast Europe, which perhaps eases their integration compared with those from Turkish, North African or South Asian backgrounds. That suggests that insofar as integration is a problem, cultural distance may matter more than religion.

It's also too simplistic to say that the terrorist threat reflects a failure to integrate Muslims. Integration is going relatively well in France, even though the country has had a number of high-profile Muslim-related terror attacks. Austria arguably does worse in making Muslim immigrants feel at home, yet terror attacks in Austria are not currently a significant phenomenon,

suggesting that violence can give a misleading picture of aggregate progress. Furthermore, keep in mind that Europe during the 1970s had a [higher](#) rate of mostly homegrown violent terrorism than it does today from Muslims. But it is at least possible that better integration can lead to more terror attacks, an uncomfortable thought. The path to integration may give some migrants more resources or higher expectations, with many good results but also with catastrophic consequences in some extreme cases. (It is often noted that many American shooters behind mass killings are native-born whites.) That may help explain why many Western Europeans aren't convinced that successful integration is possible.

The study also suggests that integration works [better](#) when the migrants are relatively numerous, perhaps because they can create mutual support services. But making that point is unlikely to win many European elections.

Much integration remains to be done, as Merkel acknowledged during this week's campaign [debate](#), but there is no road back. The good news is that Western European integration of Muslims is further along than many people believe. The bad news is that the process of integration entails significant social change and change sometimes brings turmoil. The human race is improving at this broader challenge only slowly.



Catalonia officially sets independence vote for Oct. 1

By Aritz Parra | AP as illegal. (Manu Fernandez/Associated Press)

7-8 minutes

Catalonia regional President Carles Puigdemont, right, applauds next to vice-president Oriol Junqueras, left, after the voting during a plenary session at the Parliament of Catalonia in Barcelona, Spain, Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017. Catalan lawmakers are voting on a bill that will allow regional authorities to officially call an Oct. 1 referendum on a split from Spain, making concrete a years-long defiance of central authorities, who see the vote

By Aritz Parra | AP September 6 at 7:08 PM

MADRID — Voters in Spain's prosperous Catalonia region will be asked to choose in less than a month if they want to secede from Spain, the region's pro-independence ruling government announced Wednesday in a move that puts it in open defiance of central authorities in Madrid.

Regional President Carles Puigdemont signed a decree that officially calls for a "self-

determination referendum of Catalonia" to be held on Oct. 1. His entire cabinet, which includes politicians from various pro-independence parties, also approved the document to dilute responsibility in case of prosecution.

The referendum clashes with the Spanish Constitution, which only gives national authorities the right to call such a vote. But Catalonia's pro-independence lawmakers approved a bill earlier Wednesday that is meant to provide a legal justification for the independence vote.

"The concept of a state and patriotic unities that go beyond the rights of

citizens don't have a place in today's Europe," Puigdemont said. "Catalonia belongs to this world that looks forward, and that's why it will decide its own future on the 1st of October."

A central government official told The Associated Press that Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has urged the country's top legal consultative body to review the bill. The official said Madrid is expected to challenge the law in the country's Constitutional Court on Thursday. The source asked not to be named in line with internal protocols.

Catalonia's renewed push for secession has opened one of Spain's deepest political and institutional crises of recent years. Although much of the blame has been put on the pro-independence bloc in the regional parliament, Rajoy's conservative government has been criticized for letting the situation get this far.

Puigdemont's government claims it has a democratic mandate to seek a binding independence referendum based on the universal right to self-determination. However, approval for the referendum law came after more than 11 hours of heated debate.

The support of 72 pro-independence lawmakers was enough to pass the measure, but 52 opposition members of parliament walked out in protest before the voting started. Eleven lawmakers abstained from voting.

The parliamentary debate in Barcelona saw tensions flare when the regional body's top speaker, Carme Forcadell, announced that a vote on the bill would proceed before the legislation had undergone the customary legal vetting. The vote had not appeared on the day's agenda until the very last minute.

Spain's public prosecutor announced it was readying legal paperwork to sue the speakers, including Forcadell, for disobeying previous Constitutional Court orders and for abusing power.

Ines Arrimadas, the leader of Ciudadanos (Citizens)—the main opposition party in Catalonia—also announced that she would seek parliamentary support for a no-confidence vote against Puigdemont in an effort to force new regional elections.

Spain's deputy prime minister made a televised appearance amid the chaos and numerous pauses in the meeting to announce that Rajoy's government was urging the Constitutional Court to take punitive measures against those who allowed the bill to be debated.

Soraya Saenz de Santamaria said Catalonia's parliament was holding a "fake debate" that she dubbed as an "embarrassing show" and "a kick to democracy, to Catalans and to political decency."

The Spanish government is trying to strike a delicate balance between offsetting the secessionist defiance and staying away from more dramatic measures that would further inflame anti-Spanish sentiments, such as suspending

Catalonia's autonomous powers or declaring a state of emergency that would bring the army into the mix.

In a show of political unity at the national level, the leaders of the Socialists and the business-friendly Ciudadanos party held conversations with Rajoy on Wednesday. Both leaders had separate meetings scheduled with the prime minister on Thursday.

The Catalonia region centered on Barcelona generates a fifth of Spain's gross domestic product. It self-governs in several important areas, such as police, health and education. But key areas such as taxes, foreign affairs and most infrastructures are in the hands of the Spanish government.

Both Catalan and Spanish are spoken in the region of 7.5 million people, and many Catalans feel strongly about their cultural heritage and traditions.

The pro-independence bloc has argued that full control would benefit Catalonia, an idea that gained support in times of high unemployment and harsh austerity measures as a result of Spain's 2008-2013 financial crisis.

The return to solid growth has weakened public backing for

independence, although polls show that almost eight out of 10 Catalans want to have the right to vote.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

But a referendum in defiance of Spain's rule of law, without the blessing of central authorities, has inflamed controversy. Catalan leaders have pledged to proclaim a new republic within 48 hours if the "yes" side wins the referendum, regardless of turnout.

Former Catalan leader Artur Mas said pushing ahead with the referendum was justified because a pro-independence coalition won the 2015 regional election.

"The referendum is what we have to do because we have the mandate of the peoples of Catalonia," Mas said.

Mas is the highest-ranking among Catalan politicians suspended from office and fined by the country's Supreme Court for organizing a non-binding vote on independence in 2014. The "yes" vote to break away from Spain won at the time amid a low turnout by voters.

INTERNATIONAL

THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL

Jonathan Cheng in Seoul and Farnaz Fassihi at the United Nations

7-9 minutes

Updated Sept. 5, 2017 6:41 p.m. ET

President Donald Trump pressed harder on potential military options in North Korea, offering billions of dollars in new American military equipment to allies in Asia and saying South Korea should use bigger conventional payloads on its missiles as deterrence.

The military emphasis came as U.S. officials faced an uphill negotiation at the United Nations Security Council over new sanctions against Pyongyang, with [China and Russia expressing reluctance](#) and a Monday vote on the matter sought by U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley in doubt.

U.S. Opens Way to Boost Arms Sales to Asia Allies

Jonathan Cheng in Seoul and Farnaz Fassihi at the United Nations

North Korea, meanwhile, [issued a defiant response](#) on Tuesday to U.S. attempts to impose new sanctions, declaring that it wasn't cowed by the Trump administration's warnings and hinting at an unspecified "counteroffensive." Pyongyang said that Mr. Trump was "begging for war"—not North Korea—as Ms. Haley said on Monday during an emergency Security Council meeting.

The exchanges came two days after North Korea [tested its sixth and by far most powerful nuclear bomb](#), raising alarm in world capitals from Washington to Beijing and weighing on markets from the U.S. to Asia.

Mr. Trump's offer to sell more arms, made in a Tuesday tweet, underscored his message in a weekend call with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. In that call, the U.S. leader agreed to scrap payload limits on South Korean missiles under a decades-old U.S.-

South Korean treaty, allowing Seoul to use more powerful conventional weapons, the White House said.

Mr. Trump also in that call provided what officials said was his "conceptual approval" for the purchase of billions of dollars in U.S. military weapons and equipment.

The Pentagon declined to provide specifics, but is unaware of any pending sales of the size specified by the White House, a U.S. official said.

Mr. Trump needs congressional approval to authorize most weapons transfers. But it wouldn't be difficult to advance the process due to close ties and pre-existing U.S. accords with South Korea and Japan, said Patrick Cronin, director of the Asia-Pacific Security Program at Center for a New American Security, a defense think tank in Washington.

"In general the president is pushing on an open door here," said Mr.

Cronin. "There are pre-existing agreements with Congress and our allies; there are national security overrides and all of those things make this a little more complicated."

Some U.S. military options, such as integrating Japan into [military exercises already held between the U.S. and South Korea](#), would add pressure both on North Korea and its key ally, China.

"Bringing trilateralism into some of our major exercises in the region would be very helpful," said Abraham Denmark, a former senior Asia policy official at the Pentagon during the Obama administration now a director at the Wilson Center think tank. "Starting small at the beginning, but gradually bringing it up to demonstrate to both sides how all of this works together."

The military pressure comes as the U.S. tries to convince the U.N. to maximize economic pressure on Pyongyang.

The U.S. began negotiating the draft of a new sanctions resolution with China at the U.N. on Tuesday, diplomats said, although the draft hasn't been circulated to all 15 members of the Security Council. Diplomats who had knowledge of the content said it was "very ambitious" in scope and timetable.

The U.S., along with its European and Asian allies, wants to target sectors of North Korea's economy to pressure the regime while avoiding civilian suffering, diplomats said. Oil trade that benefits the government is a priority, diplomats said.

The U.S. would have to convince China and Russia to support a resolution. While neither has openly said it would veto added sanctions, both have urged talks and said sanctions aren't effective. Russia's ambassador on Tuesday cast doubt on whether the council would be prepared to vote by Monday, as Ms. Haley requested.

Following a summit of leaders of emerging economies in China on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said resolving the tensions over North Korea will

require that all the parties engage in dialogue and warned that continued talk of a military solution could result in a catastrophe. North Koreans, he said, "will eat grass but they will never abandon their nuclear program."

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres urged the council to come up with a single, united strategy against North Korea. Mr. Guterres said he stood ready to mediate a solution.

Earlier Tuesday, Adm. Scott Swift, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, said Pyongyang's recent string of missile and nuclear tests has brought the U.S. closer to its allies in Tokyo and Seoul, rather than dividing them, as North Korea leader Kim Jong Un had hoped.

Adm. Swift's comments followed warnings that North Korea appeared to be planning to test-launch another intercontinental ballistic missile as it advances its aim of developing a nuclear-tipped missile that can threaten the U.S. mainland.

The rapid advance in North Korea's military capabilities has exposed differences between Seoul's more

dovish approach and Washington's harder-line strategy on Pyongyang. It also raised questions in Tokyo and Seoul about the U.S.'s commitment to defending its allies in the event of a conflict with North Korea.

After North Korea's nuclear test on Sunday, Mr. Trump took to [Twitter](#) to criticize South Korea's government for what he called its "talk of appeasement with North Korea."

The tweet, which appeared to be a reference to Mr. Moon's repeated proposals for dialogue with Mr. Kim, preceded the phone call between Mr. Trump and Mr. Moon late Monday in Seoul.

Prominent members of three major South Korean opposition parties, and some fringe politicians in Japan, have called for their respective countries to consider developing their own nuclear weapons—for years, a taboo idea—amid questions about whether the U.S. would be willing to protect Seoul or Tokyo as North Korea hones its ability to threaten the U.S. homeland.

Those concerns, Adm. Swift said Tuesday, were unfounded. While acknowledging an array of voices in South Korea and Japan, he said that the U.S. military was working more closely than ever before with its South Korean and Japanese counterparts.

"It's very difficult to understand exactly what Kim Jong Un is trying to achieve, but if he's trying to separate the alliances and the allegiances that we have in the region, from where I sit, it's having the opposite effect," Adm. Swift said. "From a military-to-military perspective, I don't see any change in the personal and professional relationship."

—Nancy A. Youssef, Ben Kesling, Felicia Schwartz, Kwanwoo Jun and Eva Dou contributed to this article.

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Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition as 'U.S. Presses Military Options in Asia.'

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

China Won't Help: It's Paralyzed by North Korea

Andrew Browne
6-7 minutes

If Mr. Kim is calculating that Mr. Xi won't risk precipitous action against him ahead of the 19th Party Congress, he's likely correct.

North Korea has become a wild card for Mr. Xi, and it grates on the Chinese leader to be toyed with, no less than it angers Mr. Trump.

But this is a critical moment of leadership transition for Mr. Xi, and Mr. Kim knows it. The Chinese president seeks elevation to the pantheon of Chinese Communist greats along with Deng and Mao. Some speculate Mr. Xi wants a setup that would enable him to extend his tenure beyond five years.

Any missteps ahead of the Congress could open Mr. Xi to attack from the many enemies he's made and derail his legacy.

There is plenty more the Chinese president could do to punish Pyongyang and put Mr. Kim in his place, from expelling North Korean workers to cutting off the country's oil and food lifelines.

However, the dangers of reacting forcefully at this moment are too great for Mr. Xi.

From his perspective, the most obvious peril is squeezing North Korea so hard it eventually collapses, spilling desperate refugees across the border into an area of China with a large and

potentially restless ethnic Korean population.

Worse, such a scenario, likely bringing down the Pyongyang regime, would be precisely the outcome that Washington seeks. It could bring U.S. and South Korean troops up to the border, where they would command the gateway to China's industrial heartland and routes to the capital.

Thus, Mr. Xi would be surrendering the impressive gains he has made in his first term in a geopolitical contest with the U.S. for influence in East Asia.

Bending to U.S. pressure on North Korea is politically unacceptable. Mr. Xi's "China Dream," after all, is about restoring Chinese pride after a century of foreign humiliations.

There are even perverse benefits to Beijing from Mr. Kim's nuclear brinkmanship: It keeps the U.S. military pinned down in Northeast Asia, and to the extent that it casts doubt on Washington's resolve to defend South Korea and Japan—would Mr. Trump risk San Francisco for Seoul or Tokyo?—it drives a wedge between the U.S. and its two key Asian allies.

Furthermore, letting North Korea go would give encouragement to political forces in China that Mr. Xi spent his first term ruthlessly crushing—dissidents, human rights

activists and others who might read in Mr. Kim's demise a message about the vulnerabilities of their own socialist leaders.

The Party's prestige is on the line. Among the People's Liberation Army, in particular, North Korea still evokes a revolutionary nostalgia; Mao's son died in the 1950-53 Korean War, in which Chinese forces fought the Americans to a standstill, a proud boast to this day.

The upshot is that Mr. Xi, on the brink of his greatest political triumph, looks impotent in the face of Mr. Kim's increasingly audacious provocations. The weekend's [suspected thermonuclear blast just 50 miles from the border](#) rattled windows on the Chinese side and raised official alarms about nuclear contamination.

During his first five years in office, President Xi Jinping proved to be a master of control.

His Asia policy has followed a pattern: swiftly ratcheting up tensions with U.S. friends and allies—Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines—then abruptly de-escalating. By switching on and off the threat of force, Mr. Xi enhanced Beijing's position in the region. His strategy at times has made the U.S. look weak, while burnishing his standing back home with an

audience appreciative of China's ascendance.

However, in the countdown to the 19th Party Congress, Mr. Xi requires stability more than adventure to safeguard the legacy he's built and secure his future dominance. He has taken regional flashpoints off the boil, [most](#)

[recently standing down in a territorial dispute](#) that brought Chinese and Indian troops face-to-face in Bhutan. At the same time, he's tamed disruptive forces threatening the domestic economy and subdued political foes.

Now, Mr. Kim threatens to unleash chaos on China's doorstep.

The crisis calls for Chinese action; as ever, the road to Pyongyang runs through Beijing. The irony is that the most activist Chinese leader on the global stage since Mao is paralyzed by domestic politics at a moment when his intervention is urgently required. Mr. Xi risks a coronation with the region in flames.

Write to Andrew Browne at andrew.browne@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition as "Why Xi Refuses to Go Ballistic on North Korea."

**The
New York
Times**

U.S. Seeks U.N. Consent to Interdict North Korean Ships

David E. Sanger

6-8 minutes

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Wednesday circulated a draft resolution at the [United Nations Security Council](#) that would effectively empower the United States Navy and Air Force to interdict North Korean ships at sea, inspect them to determine whether they are carrying weapons material or fuel into the country, and use "all necessary measures" to enforce compliance.

The language is included in a remarkably broad draft that would ban the shipment of all crude [oil](#), refined petroleum and natural gas to [North Korea](#), essentially seeking to plunge a country of 25 million people into a deep freeze this winter if its leaders fail to begin giving up their nuclear weapon and missile programs.

The resolution — circulated three days after the North conducted its largest nuclear test to date — would also seek to block all the assets of Kim Jong-un, the country's leader, and virtually all the assets of the country's military and its sole political party.

The resolution, which the American ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki R. Haley, said this week she wanted to bring to a vote by next Monday, seems certain to meet vociferous objections from China and Russia. Both hold veto power at the Security Council.

But if the sections authorizing interdictions at sea survive, it could set the stage for some of the tensest encounters on the high seas since the 1962 [Cuban missile crisis](#), when President John F. Kennedy ordered a complete blockade

around the island to prevent Soviet missiles from being installed.

The resolution calls for something far less comprehensive than a total blockade, which is widely considered an act of war. But it would authorize a committee of the Security Council to "designate vessels for nonconsensual inspections" and authorize all members of the United Nations — using military vessels and aircraft — "to inspect on the high seas any vessel designated by the committee."

That could set up the conditions for a conflict at sea. If the crew of a North Korean ship failed to stop or resisted a boarding party, one senior military official acknowledged in recent days, the result could be an exchange of fire at a time when Pyongyang is threatening to use its nascent nuclear arsenal, and the United States is warning of a "devastating response."

President Trump spoke with Xi Jinping, the Chinese president, from the White House on Wednesday morning, just hours before the United States sent its draft of the resolution to all 15 members of the Security Council.

Both Mr. Xi and Vladimir V. Putin, the Russian president, have opposed further sanctions, even after North Korea tested what it called a hydrogen bomb — experts have their doubts — on Sunday. "We should not act out of emotions and push North Korea into a dead end," Mr. Putin said at a meeting in Vladivostok, according to dispatches from South Korean reporters. "We must act with calm and avoid steps that could raise tensions."

That sets up a confrontation at the Security Council pitting the United States, Britain and France against

the other two permanent members. Mr. Trump appears to be using the resolution to highlight the contrast between the nations that support maximum sanctions pressure against the North and those seeking the status quo.

The Trump administration on Wednesday repeated a drastic — if highly unlikely — warning if United Nations action is blocked. The Treasury secretary, Steven Mnuchin, told reporters aboard [Air Force One](#) during a flight from North Dakota that an executive order had been prepared that would authorize a halt in trade with "anybody that does trade with North Korea." China is among dozens of nations that trade with the North.

Even some Democrats have joined the Trump administration in calling for an oil cutoff, including Senator Edward J. Markey of Massachusetts. In an interview with CBS News on Wednesday, President Barack Obama's former defense secretary, Ashton B. Carter, said he supported "a strategy of coercive diplomacy" that would steadily increase pressure on the North if it continued to test its missiles and [nuclear weapons](#), and would reduce sanctions if it complied with United Nations resolutions.

Mr. Carter, now the director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard, said he considered it "in China's interest" to "strangle North Korea," but said he was not optimistic, "because China has consistently disappointed."

The fate of the Trump administration's resolution may hinge in part on North Korean actions in the next few days. South Korea's intelligence and defense agencies have said they see

preparations for another missile test from the North's main missile launch site on the northeast coast. There is some speculation that the test could be aimed at the waters off Guam, which Mr. Kim has said will be among his next targets.

That has created a behind-the-scenes debate inside the Trump administration over how to respond — whether to consider a preemptive strike on the missile, try to intercept it with antiballistic missile batteries, or simply let the test proceed, especially if the missile appears headed for splashdown in international waters.

Administration officials briefed members of Congress on the North Korean standoff on Wednesday, but they were vague about their plans, according to people who attended.

Even if the United States managed to win approval of a complete ban on energy exports to the North, there is skepticism that it would be successful. Peter Hayes and David Von Hippel of the Nautilus Institute, experts on North Korea's energy policies, argued in a paper this week that the country would adjust to an energy embargo.

The country, they wrote, "could quickly cut its nonmilitary use by about 40 percent of its annual oil use," substituting other fuels. "There will be little or no immediate impact on the Korean People's Army's nuclear or missile programs," they added, and "little or no immediate impact on the K.P.A.'s routine or wartime ability to fight due to energy scarcity, given its short war strategy and likely stockpiling."

In a Skype conversation from Australia, Mr. Hayes said that "what worries me is that the American government may not understand that this will not work."

**The
Washington
Post**

Trump's zigzagging approach to North Korea veers toward military options

<https://www.facebook.com/anne.gearan>

8-10 minutes

President Trump's approach to the rapidly rising threat from North Korea has veered from empathy for the country's bellicose leader to finger-pointing at China to quick-

tempered threats of possible military action.

The administration's goals and tactics have also shifted, from isolating North Korea to reassuring

leader Kim Jong Un that the United States won't overthrow him to threats of, as Defense Secretary Jim Mattis put it, "annihilation."

Before Pyongyang's sixth and largest nuclear test Sunday, Trump had said U.S. military options were "locked and loaded" should North Korea behave rashly.

On Wednesday, Trump sounded subdued and statesmanlike.

"We're going to see what happens," Trump said when asked whether he is considering military action against North Korea. "We'll see what happens. Certainly, that's not our first choice, but we will see what happens."

After a "very frank and very strong" phone call with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sept. 6, President Trump said "we will not be putting up with what's happening in North Korea," but that military action is "not our first choice." President Trump said "we will not be putting up with what's happening in North Korea," but that military action is "not our first choice" on Sept. 6. (Reuters)

After a "very frank and very strong" phone call with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sept. 6, President Trump said "we will not be putting up with what's happening in North Korea," but that military action is "not our first choice." (Reuters)

While Trump has accused his predecessors of not being tough on North Korea, the zigzagging U.S. response and the president's willingness to talk openly about a military attack could be creating its own set of problems by raising the price of an eventual deal and probably making negotiations impossible for now, Asia security analysts said.

"Kim Jong Un is not begging for war," said Daniel Russel, who was the State Department's top diplomat for Asia until earlier this year. "What he wants is not conflict but some kind of major concession" from the United States and its allies South Korea and Japan.

Kim, in contrast to Trump, has been relentlessly consistent.

During Trump's nearly eight months in office, North Korea's leader has, as promised, accelerated development of a more powerful nuclear weapon and long-range missiles that could deliver a warhead to U.S. shores. The goal, Asia security specialists said, is to cut off U.S. military options and force the United States and the rest of the world to make concessions.

"Kim Jong Un has a very scrutable

game plan," said Russel, now a fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute. "Leverage his nuclear threat and monetize it."

That strategy predates Trump, and U.S. officials have complained about a shakedown for years.

But Trump's response has been far different from recent administrations' and, at times, has seemed more off the cuff than the result of deliberative planning.

He recently mused about cutting off all trade with nations that do business with North Korea, a practical impossibility and a proposal at odds with the U.S. strategy of engaging China and other nations in international economic sanctions against North Korea.

Trump spoke to Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday and told reporters that the 45-minute conversation about North Korea was productive.

"President Xi would like to do something. We'll see whether or not he can do it," Trump said. "But we will not be putting up with what's happening in North Korea. I believe that President Xi agrees with me 100 percent. He doesn't want to see what's happening there, either."

On Wednesday, Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said that if the United Nations does not put additional sanctions on North Korea, he has an executive order ready for Trump to sign that would impose sanctions on any country that trades with Pyongyang, Reuters reported.

['We'll see' Trump says of potential attack over North Korean nuclear test](#)

The muddled U.S. message includes offers of diplomacy from Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and threats of additional economic sanctions from U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley and of a "massive military response" from Mattis.

Haley told the U.N. Security Council at an emergency session Monday that Kim is "begging for war."

Trump had appeared to endorse diplomatic outreach before writing it off as pointless in a Twitter message on Aug. 30.

"Talking is not the answer!" he wrote then.

Democrats have criticized Trump's handling of the rising tensions on

the Korean Peninsula, arguing a more measured approach is needed.

"The president of the United States needs to be on the phone conducting diplomacy, not these hot and cold tweets," Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) said Tuesday in an interview with MSNBC. "We want to work with China, and we want to get them to put pressure on North Korea. On one hand, he tweets that his best buddy is President Xi, and the next day he tweets something very different."

Mattis and Tillerson along with other national security officials briefed lawmakers on North Korea on Wednesday. Democrats who attended the meeting, according to CNN, said they struck a more diplomatic tone than Trump.

"I feel like we still have two different polices on North Korea: one at the Department of State and Department of Defense, and another on the President's Twitter feed," Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) told the network.

[Republicans and Democrats urge Trump not to cancel South Korea trade deal](#)

China is the most important partner in making any economic penalties stick. Beijing worked with the United States to approve tough new export bans on North Korea last month, a strong signal of Chinese irritation with a regime it protects but cannot fully control. Beijing has signaled opposition to new penalties, potentially including an oil embargo, that the United States is now seeking through the United Nations.

"The time has come to exhaust all diplomatic means to end this crisis, and that means quickly enacting the strongest possible measures here in the U.N. Security Council," Haley said Monday.

On Tuesday, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders emphasized pressure and military options.

"Look, we've been clear about what our priorities are: that now is not the time for us to spend a lot of time focused on talking with North Korea, but putting all measures of pressure that we can," she said. "All options are on the table, and we're going to continue to keep them on the table until we get the results that we're looking for."

It is not clear where Tillerson's diplomatic overture stands. A week

before North Korea's latest nuclear test, of a hydrogen bomb, Tillerson told "Fox News Sunday" that the United States hoped Kim would take the "different path" that negotiations could offer.

"We're going to continue our peaceful pressure campaign as I have described it, working with allies, working with China as well to see if we can bring the regime in Pyongyang to the negotiating table," Tillerson said in the Aug. 27 interview.

He has gone so far as to directly address North Korea, and offer assurances that the United States does not plan to invade.

"We are not your enemy," he said on Aug. 1.

[As Tillerson tries to calm fears in Asia, Trump talks tough](#)

Since then, North Korea has twice test-fired missiles and conducted its most powerful nuclear test yet. And at least until Wednesday, Trump had increasingly emphasized military responses.

He referred only to military advisers and White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly, a retired Marine general, when tweeting about a White House emergency session on North Korea on Sunday.

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"I will be meeting General Kelly, General Mattis and other military leaders at the White House to discuss North Korea," Trump wrote.

Mattis later told reporters the session was a "small-group national security meeting" with Trump and Vice President Pence.

Any threat to the United States or its allies "will be met with a massive military response — a response both effective and overwhelming," Mattis said Sunday.

He advised Kim to heed international warnings to stand down, but he did not call for talks or repeat earlier warnings that he sees no military solution to the North Korean problem.

"We are not looking to the total annihilation of a country — namely, North Korea," Mattis said. "But, as I said, we have many options to do so."

elites, who have made their fortunes in their country's small but expanding private sector.



Rush to war? How North Korea sanctions have not been exhausted.

The Christian Science Monitor 7-9 minutes

September 6, 2017 Washington— They are known as "donju": North Korea's new class of moneyed

Despite the universal image of North Koreans as scraping by on a meager bowl of rice and clad in drab fatigues, the “donju” – Korean for “masters of money” – drive around in imported luxury automobiles, shop in pricey designer stores, and live or dine in a section of the capital dubbed “Pyonghattan.”

And it is this new class of elites that some international experts say should be targeted with sanctions as a means of pressuring the regime of Kim Jong-un over his country’s galloping nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

“The reality is that Kim is increasingly opening up the country to private enterprise and building up the loyalties of the new elites by allowing them access to the cash and foreign products they need to live their comfortable lifestyles and to make more money,” says Melanie Hart, director of China policy at the Center for American Progress in Washington.

“But once you have an elite that is dependent on importing everything from ski-lifts and Audis to Coca-Cola to maintain that lifestyle and to build more wealth,” she adds, “that creates a broad vulnerability for the international community to exploit.”

Already high tensions between North Korea and the United States and its allies in the region were sent skyward over the weekend as Pyongyang carried out its sixth and by far most powerful nuclear test Saturday. To rub in the salt, the North released photos claiming to show a miniaturized nuclear weapon capable of being mounted on a long-range ballistic missile – the kind of missile Mr. Kim vows to perfect to be able to reach US East Coast cities.

The nuclear test once again raised alarms over threatened US military intervention to take out North Korea’s nuclear and missile sites, but signals out of the Trump administration suggest that – at least for now – diplomacy will be employed to respond to the North’s

latest provocation.

Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the United Nations, declared at an emergency UN Security Council meeting Monday that North Korea is “begging for war.” But she also announced that the US will propose a new sanctions resolution that it hopes to put to a council vote next week.

Seven UN resolutions

Beginning more than a decade ago, the UN has passed seven resolutions targeting North Korea’s illicit weapons activities, and the public perception may be that, short of military action, the world has about exhausted the sanctions options and other avenues for pressuring the Kim regime.

But many diplomats and regional experts say the international community still has tools at its disposal to apply greater pressure.

Until now, most sanctions on the North have focused on the country’s income-producing exports – such as coal and other raw materials destined largely for China. But imports (both of consumer goods for the new elites and the parts and technology needed for the weapons programs) should be more aggressively targeted, they say.

Some even propose an oil embargo.

Moreover, the US has only begun to apply the kinds of unilateral sanctions on North Korea that it did on Iran and that ultimately helped create the environment for a diplomatic settlement of the Iran nuclear crisis, some experts note.

“The reality is that North Korea is still nowhere near as pressured with sanctions as other governments with whom we’ve had security problems, including Iran,” says Nicholas Eberstadt, an expert in Korean Peninsula security at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

“There’s much more to be done to restrict their access to financial markets – and by the way, a lot of that could be accomplished by the US unilaterally,” he adds. “We hold

the advantage of having the world’s reserve currency, and we should employ that” as the US did in sanctioning Iran.

Opening to private enterprise

The conventional wisdom has been that the poor and despotic North Korea simply doesn’t have the domestic pressure points of, say, an Iran. But that picture changed once the Kim regime decreed an opening to private enterprise in the early 2000s and made economic growth a primary goal, Dr. Eberstadt says.

Sanctions targeting the “donju” class’s sources of wealth are one way of upping the pressure on Kim. But Eberstadt says his close study of the North Korean economy tells him that the regime continues to benefit from a steady inflow of outside revenues.

“Under Kim Jong-un the exchange rate has stabilized and the currency isn’t falling,” Eberstadt says. Last year the economy grew by 5 percent. “That suggests there’s an untracked source of international revenue, one that serves the purposes of the regime and the elites.”

But if the US has a means of seriously restricting North Korea’s access to dollars – and thus pressuring Kim – why hasn’t it gone with it full bore?

The reason, Dr. Hart of the Center for American Progress says, is that the US hasn’t wanted to alienate third countries – like China – by targeting their companies or financial institutions doing business in dollars with North Korea.

“We have this tool that is our big advantage, but the reason we always hesitate to really use it is that we have other irons in the fire with these countries and companies,” she says.

“When it comes down to it, the White House has wanted to avoid blowing up [deals with other countries and their companies] over North Korea,” Hart says. “But when we have the Pentagon telling us how messy and deadly any military option would be, I think we need to do more than scratch the surface of

every other path forward before” resorting to military intervention.

Doubts about the consumer class

Some point out that the US has done little to implement the new sanctions the US Congress approved over the summer. And not everyone agrees in any case that the so-called Hermit Kingdom has really evolved to the point where financial sanctions targeting the consumer class and its outside partners would have any impact.

“Unlike Iran, the North Korean regime does not respond to public pressure, and I do not agree that there is an avenue opening up for that kind of pressure any time soon,” says Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association in Washington.

The only measure that might work at this point, he adds, is a full oil embargo on the North – but that would require broad international buy-in, and so realistically could only be implemented if “coupled with a serious diplomatic effort” that includes direct US-North Korea talks.

“Sanctions are useful to get the North Koreans to readjust their cost-benefit calculation, but sanctions alone aren’t going to convince them to stop their missile tests” and nuclear advances, Mr. Kimball says.

American Enterprise’s Eberstadt says more can be accomplished with sanctions, but he also cautions that nothing is likely to dissuade Kim from his national security goals. As a result, he says US and international efforts should focus on “threat reduction” rather than on denuclearization.

“Sanctions can reduce the killing power of the DPRK,” he says using the acronym for the North’s full name, “they can slow their nuclear quest and slow the ballistic missile tests. But what it comes down to,” he adds, “is that governments a lot less weird than North Korea’s don’t negotiate away what they see as their national interests. And the DPRK sees its nuclear and missile programs as vital to its national security.”



George F. Will : Will Trump lower the nuclear bar?

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

will

5-7 minutes

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. (Korean Central News Agency/Reuters)

The U.S. Air Force “sniffer plane” was collecting air samples off Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula on Sept. 3, 1949, when it [gathered evidence](#) of radioactivity, confirming that the war-shattered Soviet Union had tested a nuclear device. The Soviets’ Aug. 29, 1949, [test](#) had come faster than expected.

Dating from the [detonation](#) at the Trinity Site in New Mexico on July

16, 1945, the basic science of nuclear explosions is more than 72 years old — three years older than the North Korean nation. Ballistic missile technology is [more than 60 years old](#). The problems of miniaturizing warheads for mounting on missiles, and of ensuring the warheads’ survival en route to targets, are not sufficient to stymie a nation — consider Pakistan, whose

annual per capita income is [less than \\$2,000](#) — that is determined to have a nuclear arsenal.

North Korea has one and is developing intercontinental ballistic missiles faster than expected and with ostentatious indifference to U.S. proclamations. On Jan. 2, President-elect Donald Trump scampered up the rhetorical escalation ladder, unlimbering his

heavy artillery — an exclamation point — [to tweet about](#) North Korea's promised ICBM test: "It won't happen!" It did. North Korea's most audacious act, [firing a missile](#) over Japan, came seven days after Secretary of State Rex Tillerson praised North Korea's "[restraint](#)."

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Pyongyang's "signaling" does not involve abstruse semiotics: It wants a global nuclear reach, and as the Economist magazine [says](#), the world's unpalatable options are the improbable (productive negotiations), the feeble (more sanctions) and the terrifying (military preemption). Concerning the latter, there is no bright line, but there is a distinction to be drawn, however imprecisely, between preemptive war and preventive war. The former constitutes self-defense in response to a clear and present danger — repelling an act of aggression presumed with reasonable certainty to be imminent.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

2-3 minutes

Sept. 5, 2017 7:30 p.m. ET

When President Ronald Reagan asked physicist George A. Keyworth II to start thinking about how to shoot down an enemy's ballistic missiles, few imagined a world in which a chubby dictator's missiles and bombs would pose a threat to the U.S.

Jay Keyworth, who died on Aug. 23, became Reagan's science adviser in 1981. Reagan

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Jacob M. Schlesinger and William Mauldin

5-6 minutes

Updated Sept. 5, 2017 8:25 p.m. ET

The Trump administration's chief trade negotiator said Tuesday that he is looking to negotiate some changes to the Korea-U.S. free-trade agreement and that he is hoping for a "successful discussion" with the South Koreans—avoiding

The latter is an act of anticipation — and, to be candid, of aggression — to forestall the emergence of a clear and present danger.

When Trump threatened North Korea with "[fire and fury like the world has never seen](#)," was he threatening to cross the nuclear weapons threshold? This has been contemplated before regarding North Korea. Former Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who had been fired by President Harry S. Truman for insubordination, handed President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower [a memorandum](#) on how "to clear North Korea of enemy forces": "This could be accomplished through the atomic bombing of enemy military concentrations and installations in North Korea and the sowing of fields of suitable radio-active materials, the by-product of atomic manufacture, to close major lines of enemy supply and communication. . . ."

MacArthur badly misjudged Eisenhower, whose biographer Jean Edward Smith [says](#) that during the Potsdam Conference (July 17 to Aug. 2, 1945), when Eisenhower was told of the New Mexico test — his first knowledge of the new

weapon — "he was appalled" and "was the only one at Potsdam who opposed using the bomb." Smith says:

"As president, Eisenhower would twice be presented with recommendations from his National Security Council and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the bomb be used; first, in Vietnam to protect the French at Dien Bien Phu, then against China at the time of the Formosa Strait crisis. Both times Eisenhower rejected the recommendations. As a former supreme commander, Eisenhower had the confidence to do so, where other presidents might not have. And by rejecting the use of the bomb, there is no question that Eisenhower raised the threshold at which atomic weaponry could be employed — a legacy we continue to enjoy."

But for how long? The nonproliferation regime has been remarkably successful. During the 1960 presidential campaign, John Kennedy [cited](#) "indications" that by 1964 there would be "10, 15 or 20" nuclear powers. As president, he said that by 1975 there might be 20. Now, however, North Korea, the

ninth, might be joined by Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, among others, unless U.S. leadership produces, regarding North Korea, conspicuously credible deterrence. The reservoir of presidential credibility is not brimful.

On Aug. 1, Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) [said](#) Trump had told him that "there will be a war with North Korea" if it continues to develop ICBMs capable of reaching the United States. "We'll see," [said](#) Trump on Sunday, responding to this shouted question: "Will you attack North Korea?" *You?*

Are Congress's constitutional powers regarding war so atrophied that it supinely hopes for mere post facto notification? Ten months after Nov. 8, that day's costs, until now largely aesthetic, are suddenly, although not altogether unpredictably, more serious than were perhaps contemplated by his 62,984,825 voters.

Read more from [George F. Will's archive](#) or follow him [on Facebook](#).

Editorial : The Godfather of Missile Defense

The Editorial Board

believed that the Cold War needed to end, and part of his strategy for ending it was developing a technology to shoot down ballistic missiles in flight. It is hard to overstate the derision that greeted Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative in 1983. The day after Reagan announced SDI, Sen. Ted Kennedy mocked the President's "reckless Star Wars schemes."

Used relentlessly by the press to describe SDI, the Star Wars name stuck, and Jay Keyworth's job was to convince skeptics that Reagan's idea of shooting down missiles in flight wasn't Hollywood science fiction.

The opposition to building antimissile defense systems never relented. To his credit, and the country's good fortune, Jay Keyworth was tireless in publicly supporting the effort as scientifically achievable. It eventually gave us systems like Thaad, which can effectively intercept short- and medium-range ballistic missiles and is now deployed on the Korean Peninsula.

In a remembrance posted last week on the website of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Tekla Perry recalled a remarkably prescient comment of Keyworth's about the original rationale for SDI. "We have got a

second-class nation," Keyworth said, referring then to the Soviet Union, "virtually a developing nation, threatening the existence of the United States, threatening the entire free world . . . I think it is a pretty frightening set of circumstances, and the more I look forward into the future, the more unstable I see it."

To the extent the North Korean nuclear threat is at all containable, we have Jay Keyworth to thank for it.

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition.

U.S. Trade Representative Looks for 'Successful' Discussions With South Korea

Jacob M. Schlesinger and William Mauldin

5-6 minutes

Updated Sept. 5, 2017 8:25 p.m. ET

The Trump administration's chief trade negotiator said Tuesday that he is looking to negotiate some changes to the Korea-U.S. free-trade agreement and that he is hoping for a "successful discussion" with the South Koreans—avoiding

any mention of a possible termination of the five-year-old pact.

The remarks by Robert Lighthizer, the U.S. trade representative, were the first public comments by a top policy maker about the trade agreement, known as Korus, since administration officials said over the weekend that President Donald Trump was seriously [considering terminating the pact](#), and would discuss the matter with advisers this week.

When asked the administration's views on possible Korus withdrawal, Mr. Lighthizer said that "we have negotiations," and that "we would like some amendments to the Korean agreement." But he didn't address directly the prospect of a pullout. Mr. Lighthizer made the comments to reporters after concluding two days of meetings in Mexico City with his Mexican and Canadian counterparts over [renegotiating a separate commercial bloc](#) that Mr. Trump has threatened to end, the North American Free Trade Agreement.

It is unclear whether Mr. Trump is still weighing the Korus withdrawal option. His aides had floated the prospect Saturday morning, hours before North Korea conducted its largest nuclear test, raising questions from policy makers and experts across the political spectrum about the wisdom of picking a trade fight with Seoul at a time when Washington needed to craft a consensus strategy with its close military ally to confront Pyongyang.

Mr. Trump has repeatedly criticized the Korean agreement, complaining in particular about the doubling of the U.S. goods trade deficit with South Korea since 2011, the year before the pact took effect, to \$27.6 billion last year. Mr. Trump and some aides argue that a trade deficit can inherently be evidence of an unfair trade deal, an argument most economists call inaccurate and misleading.

The internal White House discussion about terminating Korus threatens to fray further Mr. Trump's already-tense relationship with Republicans in Congress, and with big business groups normally on friendly terms with Republican administrations.

Lawmakers were so alarmed by the weekend reports about the trade pact that, in a rare bipartisan move, the two top trade Republicans on Capitol Hill—Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch of Utah and House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady of Texas—joined Tuesday with their Democratic counterparts to issue a statement urging Mr. Trump to back down.

"North Korea's latest nuclear test underscores yet again the vital importance of the strong alliance," the statement said. While acknowledging some "frustrations" and the need to "improve" the pact, the four lawmakers wrote that "to be effective and constructive, however,

we must not withdraw from the agreement while we do so."

Iowa Republican Sen. Joni Ernst wrote her own letter to Mr. Trump "to express my strong concern" about the pact's possible abrogation, saying that it "has been particularly favorable for American agriculture." Korus has given American farmers better access to that long-closed market.

Big business groups have also rallied in recent days to try to snuff out Mr. Trump's threat, just as they did in April when he was weighing a NAFTA pullout. A Korus termination "would damage White House relations with allies in the business and agriculture communities and in Congress, greatly complicating other initiatives such as tax reform,"

Thomas Donohue, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said in a statement issued Tuesday afternoon.

"It's difficult to imagine a move that would bring more self-harm

to our economy and national security, with no benefit in return, than withdrawing from Korus," Mr. Donohue concluded. "We urge the administration not to make this rash and irresponsible move."

Write to Jacob M. Schlesinger at jacob.schlesinger@wsj.com and William Mauldin at william.mauldin@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition as 'Washington Seeks Further Negotiations On Trade With Seoul.'

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Zoellick : Trump's Looming Trade Crack-Up

Robert B. Zoellick

7-8 minutes

Sept. 5, 2017 7:13 p.m. ET

Donald Trump's trade policy is speeding toward a shipwreck. Under the Constitution, Congress has principal authority over trade, although it has delegated considerable powers to the executive. Congress needs to reassert control to block Mr. Trump's crack-up.

The president threatened last week to abandon the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement. The immediate result would be to increase barriers to American exporters, especially farmers, ranchers, manufacturers and service industries. Without the FTA, Korea's average tariff could be boosted to almost 14%, quadruple the average U.S. tariff. The European Union will retain free access to Korea through its trade deal.

Mr. Trump's impulses are strategically incoherent. China has been squeezing Korean companies because Seoul has been installing missile defenses against North Korean rockets. When Mr. Trump seeks to cut off South Korea's trade with the U.S., Seoul's logical course is to accommodate Beijing to protect ties with its largest trading partner.

Combined with his withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the president's attack on the Korean FTA signals America's unreliability as an economic partner. Asian countries will inevitably question whether America's economic retreat is consistent with U.S. security commitments across the Pacific. No

one will understand why Mr. Trump would fracture ties with Seoul—and provoke public hostility in South Korea—at a moment when North Korea's threats necessitate tight cooperation and trust to thwart Pyongyang. North Korea's Kim Jong Un will proclaim that he is Korea's true national patriot, having shown his countrymen that America is selfishly thrashing the "running dogs" in Seoul.

The recently appointed South Korean trade minister, Kim Hyun Chong, is the same man who negotiated the FTA with the George W. Bush administration, who patiently renegotiated with Barack Obama, and who worked with Congress during both terms to forge closer links. South Korea's economic and democratic development has been an incredible success story; Korea grew to become America's sixth-largest trading partner for goods even without an FTA. But Mr. Kim wanted to lock in an alliance with America in the 21st-century competition for power in the Indo-Pacific. Especially in Asia, where respect and reliability in personal relations are valued highly, Mr. Trump's shocking slap to America's Korean friends will be noted and long remembered.

Mr. Trump's tirade about South Korea is part of a much larger problem. He has repeatedly threatened to terminate the North American Free Trade Agreement, too. Conventional wisdom has treated these trade tantrums as passing storms, but the rationalizers have misread his purposes. Mr. Trump wants to reverse bilateral trade deficits, which he views as "losing." In reality, trade deficits with other countries reflect a mix of relative growth rates, differential production advantages, supply

chains, savings and investment, and currency exchange rates. The U.S. has a trade surplus with Australia, which has a surplus with China, which has a surplus with the U.S.—each reflecting comparative advantages. I have a "deficit" with my local supermarket, but I offset what I owe by earning money elsewhere, not by stocking shelves at night to pay for my groceries.

The U.S. cannot reverse trade deficits through new agreements. Mr. Trump's negotiators will try to fix outcomes by having governments set market shares or through arrangements similar to barter, like the Soviet Union's old Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Neither Mexico, Canada, South Korea nor any other market economy partner will agree to a central-planning trade model. Even if they tried, bilateral trade patterns would still reflect global comparative advantages. Some 60% of America's imports are for intermediate goods that contribute to U.S. competitiveness. Mexico's trade surplus with the U.S. primarily reflects integrated auto production, which helps U.S. companies and workers to compete globally.

The administration's NAFTA proposals reveal its own contradictions. The U.S. demands more-open markets for American goods, pressing for provisions from the TPP that Mr. Trump denounced. But the U.S. also wants the ability to ignore its commitments. The administration, for example, wants to abolish neutral panels that apply agreed rules to resolve disputes about subsidies or selling goods below cost. The U.S. also wants to be able to raise new barriers when interest groups demand "temporary protection." And the administration wants to ignore rules on treating

investors fairly. Mr. Trump's abandonment of investment protections could prove especially self-defeating if a new Mexican government reverses President Enrique Peña Nieto's move to open Mexico's energy markets.

Mr. Trump appears oblivious to these realities. His real aim may be to forge a domestic political realignment around matters such as trade protectionism, hostility to immigration and walling off Mexico. As he is unable to achieve simple solutions in North Korea, Afghanistan and the Middle East—and as his frustrations build with Congress and investigations—the danger is that he will lash out. Because his trade policy will not reverse bilateral trade deficits, the president will want to scrap "bad deals" that he can blame on others. He will destroy agreements to keep faith with his own false arguments—and to save himself.

Those in Congress who still want to give Mr. Trump the benefit of the doubt should ask how he plans to enact his new deals. NAFTA's passage in 1993 required a huge effort by President Clinton and relied heavily on Republican support. Mr. Trump is inept with Congress and will never fight for any NAFTA. Democratic lawmakers will happily embrace Mr. Trump's economic isolationism to reclaim voters they lost.

This trade policy will unravel vital ties across the Asia-Pacific region, hurt an ally facing a security crisis, destroy a North American partnership that should be the foundation for U.S. global power projection, and subvert confidence in the U.S. around the world. Congress can no longer wait for Mr. Trump to speak and act sensibly. It needs to assert its constitutional

powers over trade to stop this president's destruction.

Mr. Zoellick is a former World Bank president, U.S. trade representative and deputy secretary of state.

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley Hints at Congress Role in Making Call on Iran Nuclear Deal

Felicia Schwartz

4-5 minutes

Sept. 5, 2017 8:03 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley on Tuesday laid out a path for the White House to declare that Iran isn't complying with [the 2015 nuclear deal](#)—but leave it to Congress to decide what to do.

Although the [U.S. has said Tehran is technically abiding by its commitments](#), Ms. Haley raised critical questions about the deal, in an effort to give President Donald Trump support should he choose not to certify Iranian compliance.

Mr. Trump has called the accord between Iran and six world powers "the worst deal ever," but some of his advisers in recent months have been looking for ways to let the president say Iran isn't complying without immediately killing it.

"What happens next is significantly in Congress's hands," Ms. Haley said in a speech at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington. "If the president chooses not to certify

Iranian compliance, that does not mean the United States is withdrawing" from the accord.

Mr. Trump faces a deadline in October when he must tell Congress whether he believes that Iran is meeting the terms of the deal, which required Iran to cut back its nuclear capabilities in exchange for sanctions relief.

While Ms. Haley said she didn't know what Mr. Trump will say, the president said in [an interview with The Wall Street Journal in July](#) that he is likely to say Iran isn't meeting its commitments.

The Obama administration hailed the deal as a historic step in curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions and said they didn't intend to focus on Iran's other destabilizing behavior in the region. In her speech, Ms. Haley said the Obama administration drew "an artificial line between the Iranian regime's nuclear development and the rest of its lawless behavior."

She said Mr. Trump would be justified if he doesn't certify Iran's compliance because the deal itself is "very flawed and very limited." She said the accord discourages countries from confronting what the administration views as

destabilizing behavior, such as missile tests and support for terrorist groups.

"U.S. law requires the president to also look at whether the Iran deal is appropriate, proportionate and in our national security interests," Ms. Haley said in the speech.

Despite Mr. Trump's misgivings about the deal, he has twice told Congress that Iran is living up to its terms. He most recently did so in July after an intense fight with advisers and had come close to telling lawmakers otherwise.

The U.N.'s nuclear watchdog said last week that Iran is meeting its commitments under the nuclear deal. Before Mr. Trump faces the congressional deadline in October, the administration must decide later this month whether to waive sanctions under the terms of the deal.

Ms. Haley said she hasn't yet consulted with lawmakers about the administration's possible approach and acknowledged that European allies don't want the administration to take steps to weaken or leave the deal.

"I get that Congress doesn't want this," Ms. Haley said.

At least one foe of the deal, Sen. Tom Cotton (R., Ark.), said on Tuesday he supports Ms. Haley's strategy.

President Barack Obama didn't make the deal a treaty, which meant the Senate didn't have to ratify it. But [the agreement did pass an up-or-down vote in Congress](#) in 2015 after a bitter fight and a heavy push by the Obama administration to get it through.

That vote took place under the terms of a law known as the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which allowed Congress to review the agreement and requires the president to certify Iran's compliance with the deal every quarter.

Supporters of Ms. Haley's approach said it could give the administration space to pursue a broader strategy of cracking down on Iran.

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

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition as 'Haley Proposes New Path On Iran.'

The New York Times

Editorial : A Devious Threat to a Nuclear Deal

The Editorial Board

5-6 minutes

Oliver Munday

Nikki Haley laid the Trump administration's cards on the table this week [with a new proposal](#) aimed at sabotaging one of the Obama administration's most important diplomatic initiatives — the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. President Trump promised during his campaign to kill the deal, despite its clear benefits to American security. Ms. Haley, the United States ambassador to the United Nations, has set forth a scheme that could not only allow Mr. Trump to carry out his threat, but also shift final responsibility to Congress.

The whole idea makes no sense to anyone but Mr. Trump's hard-line advisers, who see Iran as the root of evil in the Persian Gulf. Instead of making sure the agreement works, the president would give Iran an

excuse to revive what had been a rapidly advancing nuclear capability and confront the world with another intractable nuclear challenge in addition to North Korea.

The deal, negotiated with Tehran by the United States and other major powers, imposed strict limits on Iran's nuclear activities for 10 years in return for a lifting of international and American sanctions. As an added check, Congress requires the administration to certify every 90 days that Iran is abiding by the deal, in order to continue qualifying for relief from American sanctions.

The administration has twice reluctantly [certified Iran's compliance](#) and is required to revisit the issue again next month. Ms. Haley said she doesn't know what Mr. Trump's decision will be. The International Atomic Energy Agency, which put unprecedented strong procedures in place for monitoring Iran's activities, has repeatedly judged that Iran is fulfilling its obligations. In July, Gen. Paul Selva of the Air Force, vice

chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress that based on evidence submitted to intelligence agencies, "it appears that Iran is in compliance."

Mr. Trump, however, has reportedly kept pushing his advisers to find a way out, and Ms. Haley appears to have answered the call. The essence of her case, presented Tuesday to the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, is that technical compliance with the nuclear-related commitments is not sufficient and that the president "has grounds" to declare that Iran is not fulfilling the agreement because of other destabilizing or objectionable behavior, like its ballistic missile tests, support for Hezbollah and hostility toward the United States.

"We must consider the whole jigsaw puzzle," [she said](#), "not just one of its pieces."

She's wrong. While Iran indeed is engaging in some very worrisome pursuits, the deal is confined to the

nuclear program. As long as Tehran is staying within those limits, Mr. Trump has no reason not to certify compliance. The United States and its partners need to find other ways, including sanctions already in place and dialogue, to mitigate Iran's other behavior. In the national interest, Washington has often held its nose and dealt with aggressive or unsavory governments, among them the Soviet Union, Russia, Pakistan and Egypt.

Ms. Haley misleads further when she argues that it would not constitute an American withdrawal from the deal if Mr. Trump didn't certify Iranian compliance. That kind of spin will convince no one, and it won't protect Mr. Trump for being blamed for whatever follows, including outrage from France, Britain, Germany, Russia and China, which are also parties to the agreement.

Ms. Haley's scheme would also allow Mr. Trump to punt the deal's fate to Congress, further distancing himself from responsibility. Under

American law, failure to issue the certification would open the door for Congress to reimpose sanctions on Iran. Would it be so irresponsible? Congress overwhelmingly opposed the deal when it was negotiated, but many critics now see its value. In

any case, lawmakers must demand concrete evidence of Iranian noncompliance, if there is any, before reimposing sanctions.

If Mr. Trump blows up the nuclear deal, then what? None of the original opponents of the deal, in or

out of Congress, including Mr. Trump, have offered any plausible alternative for restraining Iran's nuclear ambitions. Without such an alternative, a reckless decision to honor a reckless campaign promise invites Iran to pursue an unfettered

path to a bomb. And if deals with the United States cannot be trusted, North Korea will have one more reason to keep pursuing its nuclear program.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL**

Nour Alakraa in Berlin

5-6 minutes

Syrian Army Makes Major Advance on City Under Islamic State Siege

Maria Abi-Habib in Beirut and

increasingly close proximity to U.S.-backed forces.

The advance by Syrian forces was met with [fierce resistance by Islamic State](#), according to activists opposed to both the regime and Islamic State. Syrian military units moved in from the western side of Deir Ezzour province and linked up with another brigade inside one of two government-held enclaves inside the provincial capital, according to Syrian state-run media.

"Army units, which have been advancing from the west side of [Deir Ezzour] province, have met with the garrison of the 137th Regiment this afternoon, breaking the siege imposed on the city for more than three years," said state-controlled Syrian Arab News Agency or SANA.

Much of Islamic State's leadership, prisoners and most-valued military gear is now believed to be in Mayadeen, about 30 miles southeast of the city of Deir Ezzour. Islamic State still controls Syria's most important oil fields, which are spread throughout the province and which the group uses to fund its operations.

Despite long being at odds with the Assad regime and supporting opposition groups, Washington has opened the door to an expanded

role for the Syrian military in fighting Islamic State.

"We are here to fight ISIS as a coalition, but if others want to fight ISIS and defeat them, then we absolutely have no problem with that," Col. Ryan Dillon, spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition, said in June.

"We as a coalition are not in the land-grab business. We're in the killing ISIS business," Col. Dillon added.

The U.S. hopes to capture Islamic State leaders and intelligence in Deir Ezzour province, especially in Mayadeen, to unravel the extremist group's networks and glean information about any plans for future attacks in the West, according to U.S. officials.

An internationally brokered ceasefire between the regime and weakened rebels has largely quelled fighting in the country's civil war, allowing [the Syrian military to turn its focus](#) to the remaining territory controlled by Islamic State.

Syria has a spotty record fighting the extremists, including [twice losing control of the ancient city of Palmyra](#). But it has benefited from U.S.-led coalition's campaign against Islamic State and made significant territorial gains recently

against the weakened extremist group.

In the past two months, the regime has retaken twice as much territory as the total area it controlled in 2015 before Moscow intervened on Mr. Assad's behalf, according to Russian state news agency TASS, which quoted Russia's Defense Ministry.

The government's gains in the city of Deir Ezzour could still be reversed. The regime's military base in the enclave where the siege was broken on Tuesday is still surrounded on three sides by Islamic State fighters. The second government enclave in the city is still fully surrounded by Islamic State.

The Syrian military now must try to link the first enclave to the second, which is less than a mile away to the east, near the city's airport.

The sieges have put some 93,000 civilians trapped in the government enclaves at risk of starvation as food supplies ran low, according to the United Nations. High-altitude airdrops supplied everything from food to basic medical supplies.

—Raja Abdulrahim in Beirut contributed to this article.

Write to Maria Abi-Habib at maria.habib@wsj.com

**The
Washington
Post**

6-8 minutes

United Nations accuses Syrian government of April sarin attack

By Louisa Loveluck

the northwestern Syrian town of Khan Sheikhoun on April 4. (Jason Aldag, Sarah Parnass/TWP)

BEIRUT — United Nations investigators formally accused the Syrian government Wednesday of using the banned nerve agent sarin in a [deadly chemical weapons attack in April](#) that left dozens of civilians dead and hundreds more wounded.

The daybreak attack, the investigators said in a report, was one of more than 20 government assaults involving chemical weapons since March 2013, most of them targeting families with no part in the conflict.

The [United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Syria](#) is tasked with investigating alleged war crimes that have taken place during the six-

year conflict. But it has no capacity to prosecute any party, underscoring the geopolitical constraints that hamstring the world's response to the war.

The commission's report marked first time that a U.N. body has explicitly accused the [Syrian government of using sarin](#), a chemical that pushes the nervous system into overdrive and can kill in minutes.

[\[Global watchdog confirms use of sarin in Syrian chemical attack\]](#)

Video footage from the scene of the attack on the northern village of Khan Sheikhoun showed men, women and infants convulsing uncontrollably. In many cases, they had no idea what had hit them — sarin is colorless, odorless and tasteless.

The attack killed at least 83 people, dozens of them women and children. According to investigators, some died in their beds. A single mother who had left her house early to work said she returned to find all of her four children dead.

Images of the youngest casualties are believed to have figured in [President Trump's decision to order missile strikes](#) on a Syrian government airstrip days later, marking the first direct American military intervention against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

The Syrian government and its Russian backers had insisted that the Khan Sheikhoun attack was the fault of opposition forces in the area, or that it was entirely fabricated. The inquiry found no supporting evidence for either claim.

[\[Chemical attack that drew U.S. response was just one in a series\]](#)

Diplomacy over the Assad government's use of chemical weapons has been thorny, resulting in deadlock at the U.N. Security Council as the Syrian president's key backers have blocked resolutions to punish his armed forces.

Despite an internationally backed effort to remove the Syrian government's chemical weapons stockpiles, U.S. intelligence officials believe that it retains a significant quantity that could still be used for attacks on civilians.

The U.N. commission also criticized both a U.S.-led coalition and jihadist groups it is battling, accusing them of possible war crimes in Syria. The condemnation highlighted the breadth of atrocities in a war that has killed nearly half a million

people and driven millions more to flee as refugees.

[\[Mounting claims of civilian deaths in U.S. airstrike in Syria\]](#)

As U.S.-backed forces fight their way through the Islamic State stronghold of Raqqa, the coalition faces mounting allegations of civilian casualties from its airstrikes on heavily armed extremist groups in Syria and Iraq. In a detailed timeline of a March attack on a mosque in the northern Syrian town of Jinah, the commission said the coalition had neither taken appropriate measures to protect civilians nor provided evidence to back up its claim that the [mosque was being used as a meeting place](#) for senior al-Qaeda leaders.

"Information gathered by the Commission does not support the claim that any such meeting was being held at that time," the U.N.

report said. "Interviewees described the gathering as strictly religious, and explained that most attendees were Al-Jinah residents, and that many of them were internally displaced persons, with the exception of some residents from neighbouring towns."

At least 38 people were killed in the attack, including a woman and three boys ranging from 6 to 13 years old.

[\[Chemical weapons activity monitored at Syrian air base\]](#)

Act Four newsletter

The intersection of culture and politics.

The coalition has repeatedly emphasized that it takes extensive precautions before launching any strike that may affect civilians. On Wednesday, the commission concluded that these procedures

were not followed adequately in Jinah.

Although the targeting team had information on the target three days before the strike, the inquiry said that the expected additional verification processes were not completed.

The commission also accused Islamic State and al-Qaeda-linked rebels of targeting religious minorities with car bombs, snipers and kidnapping.

Violence, it said, continues to be carried out "in blatant violation of basic international humanitarian and human rights law principles, primarily affecting civilians countrywide."



Putin Warns Trump Administration Against Sending Weapons to Ukraine

James Marson

3-4 minutes

Sept. 5, 2017 9:25 a.m. ET

MOSCOW—President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that any delivery of weapons by the Trump administration to Ukraine's government could inflame hostilities and cause Russia-supported separatists to expand the theater of conflict.

The comments are the Kremlin's starkest warning yet about the potential consequences of any deliveries, and underscore the dilemma the White House faces as it considers sending weapons.

Kiev has fought a three-year war against a [separatist movement in eastern Ukraine](#) that Russian and Western officials say is fomented and directed by Moscow and supported by direct Russian military

interventions. Russia claims the separatists are independent actors and denies its military supports them.

"If American weapons reach the conflict zone, it's hard to say how the declared republics will react," Mr. Putin told reporters on a visit to China. "Perhaps they [the separatists] will send the weapons they have to other zones of the conflict, which is sensitive to those who are causing problems for them."

The U.S. Pentagon and State Department have drawn up plans to supply Ukraine with antitank missile and other weaponry and are [seeking approval from the White House](#), according to U.S. officials.

The front lines of the conflict, which has cost some 10,000 lives, have been largely set in [place by two peace agreements](#), although fighting continues at a handful of hot spots. Little progress has been

made on the political part of the agreements, which envisions the reintegration of the breakaway territories into Ukraine.

The U.S. has backed Ukraine with financial support and some equipment, such as short-range radar and night-vision goggles. But the Obama administration didn't send weapons amid opposition from European leaders nervous about deepening the conflict.

Mr. Putin said Tuesday that any weapons deliveries wouldn't change the situation, and would only cause more deaths. Ukrainian officials say that deliveries would deter Russia from any attempts to advance further.

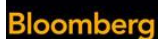
Relations between Russia and the U.S. have deteriorated rapidly after the U.S. [imposed sanctions against Moscow](#) for seizing Ukraine's Crimea peninsula in 2014.

After a recent round of [tit-for-tat expulsions of diplomats](#), the Russian president said that the Kremlin could require the U.S. to reduce further the number of diplomats in Russia from 455 to 300, which he said was equivalent to the number of diplomats that Russia has accredited in the U.S., not including those at the United Nations.

"But we won't do it yet," he said. "We'll see how the situation develops."

Asked whether he was disappointed with President Donald Trump, whose administration has maintained a hawkish line on Russia despite Mr. Trump's call for better ties during the election campaign, Mr. Putin responded that the question was naive.

"He's not my bride, and I'm not his bride, his groom. We are statesmen. Each country has its interests," he said.



Editorial : Putin's Ukraine Peace Offer Is a Trojan Horse

by The Editors
More stories by

The Editors

3-4 minutes

No, Vladimir Putin has not suddenly become a man of peace. His recent overture in Ukraine should be seen for what it is -- an effort to further his own interests -- and treated as such.

After the Russian president called for bringing United Nations peacekeepers into the Ukraine conflict, Germany's foreign minister said he was "very glad" about the "surprising" development from a Kremlin that had previously shunned calls for an international force. Nobody who knows Putin well should be so gullible.

While the [Ukrainian government](#) and its Western supporters have also called for the UN to monitor the civil war in Eastern Ukraine, they

have rightly insisted that the peacekeepers monitor the border with Russia, where [arms and advisers](#) pour in to aid the separatist rebels aiming to split the nation further apart. Yet Putin wants the international force to patrol only the unofficial dividing line between the breakaway regions and the Ukrainian military. His goal, clearly, is to have the UN forces establish a de facto independent state for the Russia-aligned forces.

This Ukraine strategy -- including the annexation of Crimea through an [illegal referendum](#) in 2014 -- is of a piece with Putin's long-term goal of creating a series of ["frozen conflicts"](#) around Russia's borders to serve as a buffer zone between his nation and what he sees as a hostile West. Others involve the breakaway Transnistria region in Moldova as well as Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the Caucasus, which have been under the Kremlin's thumb since the brief

border war between Russia and Georgia in 2008.

The West should see Putin's latest offer in Ukraine for what it is: a Trojan horse to solidify the pro-Russian rebels' hold on Eastern Ukraine. If there are to be talks about UN peacekeepers, they must begin with an understanding that they will patrol the Ukraine-Russia

border and interdict all military aid flowing to the breakaway regions.

The U.S. and its allies should also consider measures that might give Ukraine greater leverage in talks to restore its full sovereignty, including shipping so-called [lethal defensive weapons](#) such as Javelin anti-tank missiles. They should also be straightforward with the Ukrainian

government that it will never unify the nation without a serious effort to eliminate corruption and to punish those on the nationalist side who have committed war crimes in the civil conflict.

Yes, the Ukraine conflict has cooled and slipped off the headlines, but that's not really an improvement: It's exactly what Putin wants.

--Editors: Tobin Harshaw, Michael Newman

To contact the senior editor responsible for Bloomberg View's editorials: David Shipley at davidshipley@bloomberg.net

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Althaus

7-9 minutes

U.S., Canada, Mexico Make Minor Progress on Nafta Talks

William Mauldin
and Dudley

Participants in the talks described the meetings—which took place beyond closed doors in an upscale hotel in the Mexican capital—as professional and not unfriendly. Many of the officials have worked together recently on the abortive Trans-Pacific Partnership, the unratified 12-country deal that [Mr. Trump exited in January](#), or in the 1990s on the original Nafta talks.

But observers say the public demands and often-unwelcome policy moves from the governments back home are challenging Nafta negotiators, who will need a combination of hard work, flexibility and luck to hammer out a deal that can survive political scrutiny.

Mr. Lighthizer disputed the notion that the political demands are hurting the Nafta talks. "I don't think it makes it any harder at all," he said. "It just shows that it matters."

Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto addressed Nafta directly on Saturday, telling Mexicans in an annual address that he won't accept a deal that hurts the country's "dignity."

Canada's Liberal government has made it clear that it won't agree to the numerous demands of the Trump administration [without a fight](#)—or without winning "progressive" new standards on labor and the environment that aren't likely to be welcomed by Republicans in Washington.

"There's no secret that the labor provisions will be contentious," Mr. Lighthizer said.

Mr. Guajardo, Mexico's Economy Minister, noted that labor issues could be among the harder ones to deal with.

But the Trump administration has made the biggest waves, seeking to insert "America first" provisions in the three-country deal, including "buy American" procurement provisions and U.S. content rules for the auto industry. Mr. Lighthizer said Tuesday that manufacturing workers hurt by Nafta won't be forgotten.

During the Mexico City talks, Trump administration officials said the

president is considering starting the process of exiting a five-year-old trade pact with South Korea as early as Tuesday. The move didn't go unnoticed at the Nafta gathering, and some observers saw it as a warning about Mr. Trump's attitude toward all trade deals.

"If they're threatening to withdraw from the Korea agreement in the middle of a crisis on the Korean Peninsula, then you come to the conclusion you're working with people who don't want to negotiate," said Mickey Kantor, the former U.S. trade representative in the Clinton administration who won congressional approval of Nafta.

Mr. Lighthizer said Tuesday that the Trump administration would like some amendments to the agreement with South Korea. "My hope is we'll have a successful discussion with the Koreans," he added.

Then just hours before negotiators wrapped up the latest talks, the Trump administration rescinded the Obama administration's immigration program that has allowed unauthorized immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to remain in the country.

While Tuesday's move against "dreamers" by winding down the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program isn't directly connected to the talks, it could cast a shadow on efforts to strike a deal suitable to Mr. Peña Nieto, as Mexico faces presidential elections next year.

The Mexican government is "obviously concerned" about the well-being of its nationals, Mr. Guajardo said, but "it's not an issue that at this moment is technically linked to the negotiations."

The leftist front-runner in next year's vote, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, criticized trade and globalization in a speech Tuesday in Washington at the Wilson Center think tank. "It is not cheaper to buy from the outside than to produce within our borders," he said.

Mexico has vowed to defend its citizens' rights in broader, bilateral talks with the Trump administration,

including the labor rights of Mexican migrant workers in the U.S.

The Mexican election, along with the U.S. congressional elections next year, has led Washington and Mexico City to push for a Nafta deal by the end of the year, a goal that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has also recognized.

To achieve that, negotiators will have to accelerate progress in future rounds.

U.S. officials are still working with business and labor groups, Congress and government agencies to figure out their exact stance on sensitive issues. The U.S. domestic consultations—on issues including a divisive dispute system that allows investors to challenge governments, and on complicated "rules of origin" for determining which products get duty-free treatment in North America—have had the effect of delaying progress in some areas and could also give an opening to Mexico and Canada to get their language to the negotiating table first, a former Canadian official said.

"We all have clearance processes that we have to go through," Mr. Lighthizer said.

The Trump administration is working to strike a balance domestically between its own efforts to boost U.S. sovereignty and reduce Mexican imports in an updated Nafta and the requirements for getting a deal through a Congress led by Republican lawmakers, which back less controversial updates to the deal.

For any deal reached with Canada and Mexico, "I have to get it through the White House, and then I have to get it through Congress," Mr. Lighthizer said.

—Robbie Whelan and Jacob M. Schlesinger contributed to this article.

Write to William Mauldin at william.mauldin@wsj.com and Dudley Althaus at Dudley.Althaus@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition as 'Minor Progress Made in Nafta Deal.'

Updated Sept. 5, 2017 6:05 p.m. ET

MEXICO CITY—U.S., Canadian and Mexican officials, buffeted by political disagreements and controversial moves by the Trump administration, notched relatively minor progress in recent days in a big push to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement this year.

[The second round of Nafta talks](#) in Mexico City wasn't intended to result in major breakthroughs or serious horse-trading among negotiators, and more substantive progress is expected in the third round later this month in Ottawa, officials said. Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said the second round built on the preparatory work of the first round in Washington.

"We have found mutual agreement on many important issues," U.S. trade representative Robert Lighthizer told reporters Tuesday.

U.S. officials said they reached broad consensus, but not full agreement, in provisions governing small and medium businesses, services, digital trade and the environment.

Mexico's Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo said he expects to "start seeing results in the third round of talks."

An adverse political backdrop isn't helping negotiators with a goal of wrapping up talks around the end of the year and submitting a new Nafta for approval in the countries' congresses and parliament as soon as next year.

President Donald Trump, who made criticism of Nafta [a centerpiece of his 2016 campaign](#), recently renewed threats to pull out of the trade agreement, which has bound North American economies through shared commercial rules and duty-free trade for 23 years.

Editorial : Making Canada Great Again

The Editorial Board

2-3 minutes

Sept. 5, 2017 7:30 p.m. ET

Throughout his presidential campaign, Donald Trump liked to bang on about how Mexicans are stealing American jobs, and he called the North American Free Trade Agreement “maybe the worst trade deal ever signed anywhere but certainly ever signed in this country.” Now someone on the other side of the U.S. border is finally agreeing with him.

But it isn't Mexico. It's Canada. And this is probably not what Mr. Trump expected when he forced Nafta's trading partners back to the negotiating table. As part of this renegotiation, the Canadians are now complaining that U.S. labor laws are unfair to Canada. Specifically, the Globe and Mail reports that Canadian negotiators spent Sunday's talks in Mexico City trying to persuade their U.S. counterparts to pass a federal law negating the right-to-work laws that now prevail in 28 U.S. states.

The Canadians argue that these laws, by reducing the power of unions to compel dues from workers, mean weaker unions,

lower labor standards and reduced wages. This in turn means that when it comes to attracting business, these U.S. states enjoy an unfair advantage over the higher-cost Canadians. The Canadians say they only want to level the playing field.

In other words, the Canadians are arguing that the U.S. is doing to its markets what Mr. Trump accuses Mexico of doing to ours: stealing jobs through lower-cost labor. The leader of Canada's largest trade union, Jerry Dias, out-Trumped Mr. Trump in his bluntness: “Canada's got two problems,” he says. “The low-wage rates in Mexico and the

right-to-work states in the United States.”

It's easy to laugh over someone turning Mr. Trump's trade argument against him, especially when there's zero chance of doing away with U.S. right-to-work protection. But there's a serious point amid the absurdity: A reminder that sometimes when people complain about unfair trading practices, what they're really objecting to is old-fashioned competition.

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition.

Norris : Trump's Global Democracy Retreat

Pippa Norris

6-8 minutes

Julianna Brion

Under the leadership of Donald Trump and Rex Tillerson, the State Department is considering a mission reform that includes the abandonment of democratic assistance and human rights. The current [mission statement](#) reads, “The department's mission is to shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere.”

Dropping the words “just” and “democratic” would be fully consistent with the transactional realism that has characterized Mr. Trump's rhetoric.

And such a change might reflect a growing [feeling](#) that most of the programs to support democracy abroad and the importance of democratic ideals are wasteful, inefficient, unappreciated or even damaging. In America, the public (especially Republicans) has increasingly favored nationalism and isolationism, according to some polls, in which the United States focuses on its own problems, with many [wary](#) of global humanitarian engagement.

But such a shift in United States foreign policy would be a historic mistake, abandoning America's deepest values, eroding international commitments to human rights, and setting off dismay

among friends and joy among foes around the globe. It would be the ultimate symbol of the end of American leadership in the world.

This commitment to democracy is far from recent; it has been a red thread running through decades of bipartisan American foreign policy. A century ago, on April 2, 1917, during a speech asking Congress to declare war on Germany, Woodrow Wilson delivered one of the most [resonant lines](#) in the history of the American presidency: “The world must be made safe for democracy.” In 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, in the [Atlantic Charter](#), committed the World War II allies to protect “the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.”

And since then, democratic ideals have been articulated in speeches by every president, Republican and Democratic.

Under President Trump, however, priorities have shifted. As one important indicator, when speaking about the State Department budget for fiscal year 2018, Mr. Tillerson's [statement](#) was silent about human rights and democracy: “This budget request reflects the president's ‘America First’ agenda that prioritizes the well-being of Americans, bolsters U.S. national security, secures our borders, and advances U.S. economic interests.” The [budget](#) proposes slashing spending for the sector on “governing justly and democratically” to \$1.6 billion in 2018 from \$2.3 billion in 2016.

This may sound like a lot of taxpayer money, but it is a drop in the bucket compared with the \$658 billion for fighter jets, ships, helicopters and troops approved by the House in late July. The Agency for International Development and State Department use the resources for programs on rule of law and human rights, good governance, political competition (including spending on elections and political parties) and civil society.

It is impossible to demonstrate the value of programs in democracy, governance and human rights on a dollar-and-cents basis. But when we drill down to the details for programs of international assistance intended to strengthen democratic governance around the world, my [research](#) demonstrates that many standard interventions do work: for example, quota policies increasing the number of women in elected office; training that improves the skills of local electoral officials; and constitutional and legal reforms.

Some risky investments may not pay off. Some countries — like Venezuela, Poland and Hungary — have clearly moved toward autocracy in recent years.

In the longer term, however, as Freedom House, an American watchdog organization, demonstrates, there have been widespread gains worldwide. Progress is often incremental and rarely featured in newspaper headlines — but it happens all the time. Advancing democracy and human rights helps to generate the underlying conditions most favorable to peace and stability, ensure the delivery of public

services, and build allies and friends. It is also, quite simply, the right thing for America to do.

As the United States has been one of the leading actors promoting democracy and human rights worldwide, any abandonment of this work sends [damaging](#) diplomatic signals about America's priorities.

Of course the promotion of democracy and human rights abroad has sometimes proved more rhetorical than real in cases of United States foreign policy where these values have clashed with other economic or military priorities, especially in Latin America. Today, democracy promotion is colored by memories of the neocon adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan during the administration of George W. Bush. The Obama years saw a more cautious approach in foreign policy than under the neoconservatives.

As one important indicator of changing priorities, the total [amount of foreign assistance](#) allocated for democracy, human rights and governance dropped by half under the Obama administration, to \$1.9 billion in 2015 from \$3.5 billion in 2010, before recovering ground in 2016 at \$2.72 billion.

The foreign policy of the Trump administration is likely to accelerate a new global wave of decline for human rights, indicated by the shrinking number of democratic regimes around the world and the resurgence of authoritarianism, encouraging a newly assertive Russia.

Even under the basic principles of transactional realism, this is not in America's interests.

People protesting and mourning the killing of the Indian journalist Gauri Lankesh in New Delhi, on Wednesday. Tsering Topgyal/Associated Press

The murder on Tuesday of the Indian [journalist Gauri Lankesh](#), a fearless critic of rising Hindu-nationalist militancy, has all the hallmarks of a hit job.

"The message and not to independent journalists but to all dissenters is loud and clear," [tweeted](#) Sidharth Bhatia, founding editor of the Indian online news site

The Wire. "We are watching you and one day we will get you."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has let a climate of mob rule flourish in India, with his right-wing Hindu supporters vilifying "secularists." The venom that reactionary social media trolls direct at journalists, or "presstitutes" as they call them, is especially vicious, but not entirely new. At least 27 Indian journalists have been killed since 1992 "in direct retaliation for their work," according to the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#). Only one of the killers has been convicted.

Still, Ms. Lankesh's murder shocked India's news media and set off [protest marches](#) in several Indian cities. "Journalists are increasingly

the targets of online smear campaigns by the most radical nationalists, who vilify them and even threaten physical reprisals," [Reporters Without Borders](#) said.

The government of the state of Karnataka is [investigating](#) the killing of Ms. Lankesh, an editor and publisher of a Kannada-language weekly tabloid, who was shot outside her home in Bengaluru. Her family has given the police closed-circuit [video](#) of the murder scene, so that the killers, and anyone who may have ordered the assassination, may be brought to justice.

This has not happened so far in the murders of other outspoken critics of right-wing Hindu nationalists.

[Narendra Dabholkar](#), whose campaigns against superstitious practices angered many Hindu religious activists, was shot to death near his home in Pune in 2013. Two years ago, [Malleshappa Madivalappa Kalburgi](#), a former vice chancellor of Kannada University who spent decades debunking peddlers of superstition, was fatally shot in his home in Dharwad.

Ms. Lankesh had voiced concern about the climate of menace against journalists who didn't toe the Hindu-nationalist line. If Mr. Modi doesn't condemn her murder forcefully and denounce the harassment and threats that critics of Hindu militancy face daily, more critics will live in fear of deadly reprisal and Indian democracy will see dark days.



Editorial : Cambodia's ruthless leader is stepping up his authoritarian game

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

11-14 minutes

September 6 at 7:15 PM

CAMBODIA'S NORMALLY repressive leader, Hun Sen, is on a tear even by his standards. In recent weeks he has outdone himself in destroying what remains of independent news media, civil society and political opposition. His apparent motive is to wipe out any contrary voices before a July 2018 election, transforming a malfunctioning democracy into a fully authoritarian state.

The latest turn of the screw came Sunday, with the [arrest](#) of [opposition leader Kem Sokha](#) and the announcement two days later that he had been charged with [treason](#) for "a secret plan and the activities of conspiracy." His "red-handed crime" was his appearance

in a 2013 video telling supporters he received U.S. support and advice in planning political strategy. His lawyer, Pheng Heng, denied this was a crime, [telling](#) Reuters: "What he talked about was elections in a multi-party democratic way." Kem Sokha's arrest is a severe [setback](#) for his Cambodia National Rescue Party, previously headed by [Sam Rainsy](#), who resigned earlier this year and is in exile. The party, established in 2012, posed the first real challenge in years to Hun Sen's rule. No wonder it is now in his crosshairs.

Another target is [the Cambodia Daily](#), a newspaper known for its critical investigative reporting and fierce independence. Faced with a one-month deadline from the government to pay \$6.3 million for years of back taxes, which the paper disputed, [the Daily closed its doors Monday](#) with a huge front-page headline in the last edition: "Descent Into Outright Dictatorship."

The paper, founded by American journalist Bernard Krisher in 1993, was already in a perilous financial condition, and officials said the tax threat effectively forced its closure. At the same time, the government has been actively [attempting to silence radio broadcasts](#), forcing dozens off the air; it is also pressuring radio station owners to stop relaying broadcasts of Radio Free Asia and Voice of America.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

On Aug. 23, Cambodia [ordered](#) the National Democratic Institute, a nongovernmental organization loosely affiliated with the Democratic Party in the United States, to cease operations and its foreign workers to leave the country. The NDI had worked in Cambodia for 25 years, with both the ruling party and opposition, attempting to help [strengthen](#)

[democratic processes and institutions](#). Its expulsion was based on a [2015 law](#) on associations and nongovernmental organizations that has been widely criticized as designed to serve as a weapon against such groups.

Cambodia's real [patron](#) is authoritarian China, which has been generous with aid and [praised](#) the Hun Sen regime this week for its efforts to "uphold national security and stability." This is Chinese code for imprisoning critics. The State Department [expressed](#) "grave concern" about the arrest of Kem Sokha, but at the same time President Trump has [declared](#) that the United States will not try to build democracy in other nations. "We are not asking others to change their way of life," Mr. Trump [said](#) recently. Hun Sen must think now is a good time to shutter what's left of Cambodia's democracy.

ETATS-UNIS



Trump Administration Ends DACA Program for Immigrants (UNE)

Laura Meckler
8-10 minutes

Updated Sept. 5, 2017 9:25 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump urged lawmakers on Tuesday to pass broad immigration legislation by March as he said he would end a program that shields undocumented immigrants who entered the U.S. as children.

The move ignited an emotional battle in Congress and, in particular, among Republicans, who are [divided over the five-year-old program](#). Congressional leaders in both parties promised to protect these young people from deportation, but the path to achieve that goal was unclear. Under the GOP president's order, some of these immigrants will begin losing protections in March.

The White House suggested it wanted legislation addressing not just the young people affected by Tuesday's move but other immigration issues, such as enforcement, border security and limiting future legal immigration. Each piece is controversial on its own, and putting them together has proven elusive over many years of efforts on Capitol Hill.

The president, who has argued that his Democratic predecessor

overstepped his authority when he created the program, said Congress must work on a legislative fix.

"Congress now has 6 months to legalize DACA," he said in a tweet Tuesday evening. He added: "If they can't, I will revisit this issue!" but it wasn't clear what he had in mind.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program covers nearly 800,000 people who were brought

to the U.S. as children and meet other qualifications—such as schooling or military service—and are temporarily granted work permits and given safe harbor from deportation.

Any effort to pass immigration legislation must compete with other priority items on a packed congressional calendar. Among them: raising the federal-debt ceiling, funding the government and [paying for Hurricane Harvey relief](#), plus efforts to [rewrite the tax code](#) and shore up the health law's insurance exchanges.

The decision to end the program, which was created by former President Barack Obama, was welcomed by advocates for stricter immigration enforcement, including the attorney general of Texas, whose [threat to sue the administration](#) over the program added to the pressure on the White House.

The move was widely condemned by Democrats, some Republicans, [business executives](#), immigrant-rights advocates and educational leaders as a cruel step that will hurt people who they said did nothing wrong and are contributing to the nation.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the policy shift, reiterating his long-held belief that Mr. Obama had overstepped his authority. Mr. Obama's administration "deliberately sought to achieve what the legislative branch specifically refused to authorize," he said.

Mr. Sessions said the participants were taking jobs from U.S. citizens, that the program was encouraging more illegal migration and that it was implemented even though Congress had declined to pass the same policy into law.

Administration officials also said that winding the program down over

six months was better than having it abruptly terminated by a court.

The reaction was swift. Protesters gathered in front of the White House and at Trump Tower in New York, where nine immigrants protected by the program and three other people were arrested. In Denver, hundreds of people took to the streets to protest the move.

Mr. Obama issued a rare public statement in opposition to his successor. "Whatever concerns or complaints Americans may have about immigration in general, we shouldn't threaten the future of this group of young people who are here through no fault of their own, who pose no threat," he said.

Several states with liberal leaders threatened lawsuits to contest Mr. Trump's decision, and one legal challenge was already pending in New York. The move was also condemned by Mexican officials, and some predicted it would sour the atmosphere around negotiations over [revamping the North American Free Trade Agreement](#).

Officials said that the permits given to young immigrants under the program, which are good for two years, will remain in force until they expire. Some 150,000 participants whose grants expire before March 5, 2018, will be able to renew their status if they file applications by Oct. 5. Officials said no new applications filed after Tuesday would be processed.

Absent congressional action, program participants will see their permits expire starting in March, meaning they won't be able to work legally and will be eligible for deportation.

Many immigrant advocates expressed concern that the government would use information collected as part of the program's application process to track people down for possible deportation.

On Tuesday, Department of Homeland Security officials said they wouldn't target former program participants and would only use their information if there were a significant law-enforcement or national-security risk. They also reiterated that their priorities in enforcement remain with people with criminal records or previous deportation orders.

People participating in the program were both angry and nervous about their futures.

"Immigrant youth are standing up today and saying in no uncertain terms this is our home, we are here to stay," said Cristina Jimenez, executive director of United We Dream, an advocacy group that represents these people. "We will not be pushed back into the shadows."

In taking the action, Mr. Trump fulfilled a campaign promise to end the program, but the move contradicts assurances he has given since taking office that these people, often dubbed Dreamers, had nothing to worry about.

In his statement, Mr. Trump encouraged action on Capitol Hill to protect program participants, while signaling he would want any legislation to include his own immigration priorities.

Republicans are divided among those who see an urgency to protect these immigrants, those who oppose such action and those who are willing to go along only as part of increased immigration enforcement of some sort.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders suggested the president wouldn't accept legislation protecting these immigrants unless it was paired with other elements of the debate.

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) signaled Tuesday he would try to pass legislation that protects

program participants, and possibly take on other immigration issues.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.), a longtime backer of liberalized immigration laws, called this a "defining moment" for the Republican Party and hoped action on the Dream Act, which would provide a path to citizenship for young people brought to the U.S. as children, would be a first step.

"This may be what we needed in Congress to get our act together...a real issue of real live people who need us to act decisively," he said.

Several versions of the Dream Act are pending in Congress. Such legislation was last voted on in 2010, when it passed the House but fell five votes short in the Senate.

Some Republicans have signaled they are open to such legislation, though some hope to pair it with immigration-enforcement measures.

Democrats and immigrant-rights advocates said they will insist on help for the young people without conditions. Democrats are in the minority in Congress but may have leverage. For instance, they could insist on legislation protecting young immigrants as part of a spending bill required to keep the government open after current funding expires Oct. 1, which is likely to need Democratic votes to pass.

On Tuesday, Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D., Ill.), a longtime immigrant advocate, pledged to oppose any spending bill without protections for the Dreamers. "If they need our votes, we are bringing 800,000 young immigrants with us," he said.

—Alicia A. Caldwell, Byron Tau and Nancy A. Youssef contributed to this article.

Write to Laura Meckler at laura.meckler@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition as "Dreamers' Program Ended."

The New York Times

Democrats Begin Legal Assault on Trump's Move to End 'Dreamer' Program (UNE)

Alexander Burns and Vivian Yee

9-12 minutes

Dreamers, from left, Isaac Montiel, 28, Monica Camacho, 23, and Cynthia Toyco, 33, hold their childhood pictures during a news conference on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. Jose Luis Magana/Associated Press

President Trump's immigration policies faced a renewed legal onslaught on Wednesday, as a

coalition of Democratic attorneys general, nonprofit groups and private companies announced they would oppose his rollback of Obama-era protections for people who entered the country illegally as children.

In an echo of the campaign against Mr. Trump's effort this year to ban travelers from parts of the Muslim world, a group of 16 attorneys general — all Democrats — filed suit in Federal District Court in Brooklyn, claiming that Mr. Trump

had improperly upended the policy known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA.

Led by Attorneys General [Eric T. Schneiderman](#) of New York, Maura Healey of Massachusetts and Bob Ferguson of Washington, they alleged Mr. Trump's shift was driven by racial animus toward Mexican Americans and that the Trump administration failed to follow federal rules governing executive policy making.

On Tuesday, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the Trump administration would phase out DACA beginning next March. The decision came as a group of Republican attorneys general threatened to sue the administration if it did not end the program.

Announcing the legal challenge Wednesday alongside a crowd of young immigrants and immigration advocates, Mr. Schneiderman accused the Trump administration of using the threat of lawsuits as a

"pretext" that hid the president's true motives: bias against immigrants and Latinos.

Mr. Schneiderman's lawsuit said that "ending DACA, whose participants are mostly of Mexican origin, is a culmination of President Trump's oft-stated commitments — whether personally held, stated to appease some portion of his constituency, or some combination thereof — to punish and disparage people with Mexican roots."

In an interview on Wednesday, Mr. Schneiderman said, "We think the court will take a look at what's behind the change in policy and conclude that the rationales offered yesterday don't make any sense."

Additional lawsuits are expected: Attorney General Xavier Becerra of California, a Democrat, intends to file a separate challenge to Mr. Trump's plans, according to people briefed on his plans. Several major companies intend to join the lawsuits, and two, Microsoft and Amazon, have pledged to pay the legal expenses of any employees who become vulnerable to deportation.

The loosely coordinated legal strategy faces uncertain prospects, and may represent a kind of precautionary measure for supporters of DACA, who are also engaged in a ferocious campaign aimed at spurring Congress to pass a law protecting people in the program from deportation. The litigation is likely to become a political rallying point for opponents of Mr. Trump, and should the legislative effort fizzle, a court challenge could become an alternative vehicle to derail or delay his policies.

To some extent, the court battle could reproduce some of the arguments surrounding Mr. Trump's travel restrictions, pitting the traditionally sweeping powers of the presidency against claims that this particular administration, on a specific matter of policy, had misused its authority.

But presidents typically have broad discretion in matters related to national security and border control, and legal opponents of Mr. Trump's

policy are in the awkward position of arguing that while President Barack Obama had the presidential authority to create DACA, Mr. Trump does not have the authority to freely undo it. And the government can also assert that undercutting Mr. Trump's decision to rescind the program would impinge on his power to enforce immigration law.

Jonathan Turley, a professor at George Washington University Law School, said Mr. Obama's program was always going to be vulnerable to the whims of his successor.

"It'd be rather curious if President Trump could not use the same authority that President Obama used to create DACA," Mr. Turley said. Echoing conservative arguments that Mr. Obama had overstepped his power, he added: "This is a problem you have when you ignore the constitutional structure. This matter should've always remained in Congress."

Besides the argument that the Trump administration has violated the equal protection clause of the Constitution, the lawsuit filed Wednesday makes a more complex claim, saying that the administration failed to follow the right process, under the Administrative Procedure Act, for shutting down Mr. Obama's program.

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman of New York, backed by "Dreamers" and their supporters, announces the filing Wednesday of a multi-state lawsuit to protect Dreamers from deportation. Drew Angerer/Getty Images

The states argue that DACA had become so entrenched in the immigration system that to abruptly end it was "arbitrary and capricious," and that such a U-turn demanded a better explanation than what administration officials offered on Tuesday.

"Numerous public officials from both political parties have reinforced the federal government's promise to provide continuity and fair treatment to DACA grantees, and have recognized that DACA grantees have relied on the government's

representations in applying for DACA," the lawsuit said.

Michael J. Wishnie, a professor at Yale Law School who is helping to sue the administration on behalf of a DACA recipient in a separate lawsuit, said officials were, of course, allowed to change a policy.

"But when people have come to rely on it," he said, "they have to explain themselves."

Andrew J. Pincus, a Washington-based lawyer who has argued frequently before the Supreme Court, suggested Mr. Trump's approach to DACA might be vulnerable in court, in part because he had done relatively little to justify it as a matter of policy.

The Trump administration has cast its withdrawal of Mr. Obama's policy largely as a matter of legal necessity, arguing that DACA would be unlikely to survive the expected challenge from Republican attorneys general. Devin O'Malley, a spokesman for the Justice Department, defended the DACA announcement as a corrective to Obama administration overreach.

"While the plaintiffs in today's lawsuits may believe that an arbitrary circumvention of Congress is lawful, the Department of Justice looks forward to defending this administration's position," Mr. O'Malley said.

But Mr. Pincus said that if a court finds the underlying DACA policy is legal, it could unravel that rationale.

"The whole basis for rescinding DACA is the conclusion that it's illegal," said Mr. Pincus, who is a supporter of the Obama administration policy. "If you're wrong, your decision is arbitrary and an abuse of discretion."

In casting DACA aside on Tuesday morning, Mr. Sessions said that the power to protect young immigrants from deportation lay with Congress alone. But Mr. Trump may have snarled his own attorney general's argument [by tweeting](#), just eight hours after the announcement, that if Congress did not act, "I will revisit this issue!" The post, Mr. Turley said, seemed to suggest that the president did, in fact, have the

authority to intervene on behalf of the Dreamers, as DACA recipients are known.

In the short term, the legal offensive may help galvanize further political opposition to Mr. Trump's decision, offering activists, businesses and other interest groups a way of magnifying their objections through court filings and placing additional pressure on lawmakers to act. A number of private companies, including Microsoft, Amazon and Starbucks, have filed or are expected to file briefs supporting the multistate lawsuit.

Brad Smith, Microsoft's president and chief legal officer, indicated the company would use its considerable resources to oppose Mr. Trump's policy in other ways: He said in a blog post on Tuesday that Microsoft would pay for the legal costs of any employee the government threatens to deport, and the company said in a legal document that 39 DACA beneficiaries were "employees or current or recent interns."

Like Microsoft, Amazon said it intended to pay for legal representation for its affected employees, and stated in a legal filing on Wednesday that it had identified nine employees who qualified.

Several state attorneys general said they were taking steps to thwart Mr. Trump's immigration policy in other ways. Mr. Schneiderman said his most immediate concern was to protect the sensitive information immigrants had supplied to the government while applying for DACA status, including addresses and fingerprints.

Immigration officials said on Tuesday that information would not be "proactively" used to arrest the immigrants after DACA expires but could be made available for criminal and national security investigations.

Mr. Becerra said the forthcoming litigation from his office would be one part of a larger strategy to marshal resistance to Mr. Trump's immigration order. "I don't care if it's in the court of law or in the court of public opinion, we're going to fight," Mr. Becerra said.

misgivings. But in June, 10 GOP state Attorneys General presented an ultimatum: Kill DACA or we'll sue.

They could make this threat because President Obama unilaterally issued the policy in June 2012 putatively because Congress failed to reform immigration, but the end-run was timed to galvanize his



Editorial : The Dreamer Debacle

The Editorial Board

6-7 minutes

Updated Sept. 6, 2017 2:09 p.m. ET

President Trump is taking flak from all sides for ending his predecessor's Deferred Action for

Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, thus putting some 800,000 young immigrants—so-called Dreamers—in legal limbo. Though the President and Barack Obama share responsibility for instigating the crisis, Mr. Trump and Congress now have an obligation to fix it and spare these productive young adults from harm they don't deserve.

Mr. Trump was at his worst during the campaign when he assailed DACA as an "unconstitutional executive amnesty," though to his credit he later evinced a change of heart toward these immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children. The White House continued DACA despite legal

base before the election. He also knew that Dreamers have widespread public sympathy, including among Republicans who otherwise support strict immigration enforcement. He figured Republicans would harm themselves politically by opposing the compassionate policy and that a GOP successor couldn't roll it back without a public backlash.

This was Mr. Obama at his most cynical, and it takes gall for him to scold Mr. Trump as he did Tuesday for making a "political decision" about "a moral question" and "basic decency." Mr. Obama's "political decision" to act as his own legislature teed up this moral crisis and created the legal jeopardy.

DACA allows undocumented immigrants under age 36 to apply for legal status and work permits, which can be renewed every two years. Applicants cannot have a serious criminal conviction. They must attend school, have a job, or serve in the military.

As America's problems go, these young adults shouldn't even be on the list. And it shows the Republican Party at its worst that the state AGs and Attorney General Jeff Sessions want to make this an urgent priority, rather than let Congress take it up when it has a less crowded schedule. They are pandering to the restrictionist right

that is a minority even within the GOP.

But as a legal matter, they are right that Mr. Obama's DACA diktat presents legal problems. The Constitution gives Congress the power to write immigration law, and issuing work permits confers a right that is the purview of the legislative branch.

The GOP AGs led by Texas's Ken Paxton threatened to amend their lawsuit against the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA), which Mr. Obama issued in November 2014. That sweeping order granted legal protections to four million or so undocumented immigrants and stretched far beyond any reasonable definition of prosecutorial discretion.

In 2015 the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals stayed DAPA, holding that the order usurped congressional authority. The Supreme Court left the injunction in place last year. Mr. Sessions is probably right that DACA "is vulnerable to the same legal and constitutional challenges that the courts recognized with respect to the DAPA program."

But DACA presents distinct humanitarian and economic concerns—as well as a government promise that carries a moral if not legal obligation. Unlike DAPA,

which was never implemented, some 800,000 Dreamers have used DACA to reorder their lives.

The Obama Administration invited Dreamers out of the shadows and asked them to submit personal identification and records that could now allow the feds to track them down. These young immigrants have committed no crime and trusted the federal government to protect them. A study last year by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center found that 87% of DACA beneficiaries are employed.

They would no longer be able to work legally once their DACA permits expire. And if they forge work documents, they would become a deportation priority. Dreamers could be forced to return to a country where they have no family and may not even speak the language. Is deporting these people really how Republicans want to define themselves?

The White House seems to understand the terrible political optics, which is why it has tossed the issue to Congress. It plans what it calls "an orderly wind-down of DACA" rather than wait for a potentially disruptive court injunction. Current Dreamers whose permits expire over the next six months will be allowed to apply for

renewals by Oct. 5, though no new applications will be accepted.

This gives Congress at least some time to enact the current Dreamer legalization process in a statute that is the proper legal path under the Constitution's separation of powers. Mr. Trump signaled his willingness to sign such a bill on Tuesday when he tweeted, "Congress, get ready to do your job—DACA!" We hope he means it.

This will be a test of the sincerity of both Republicans and Democrats in Congress. Some Republicans like Iowa Rep. Steve King will oppose any DACA legalization as "amnesty," and will want to load up a bill with poison pills that moderates and Democrats can't abide. Many Democrats may also be more than happy to block legislation and use the Dreamers as a cudgel against Republicans next year.

An obvious bipartisan solution would trade authorizing DACA in return for additional border enforcement. But Republicans should also be prepared to send Mr. Trump a clean authorization to make good on the government's moral obligation to these young people.

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition.



gtonpostopinions

4-5 minutes

Activists protest the Trump administration's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. (Eduardo Munoz Alvarez/Getty Images)

By [Editorial Board](#)

[The Post's View](#)

Opinion

Opinion A column or article in the Opinions section (in print, this is known as the Editorial Pages).

September 6 at 7:16 PM

IN ANNOUNCING an end to the program providing temporary relief from deportation to young immigrants brought into the country illegally as children, both [President Trump](#) and [Attorney General Jeff Sessions](#) have been clear: The responsibility of saving the "dreamers" is now on Congress's shoulders. House Speaker Paul D.

Editorial : Trump's messy and muddled reasoning on DACA

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

Ryan (R-Wis.) has sent [encouraging signals](#) so far, promising to push forward with legislation and telling dreamers to "rest easy." That's a praiseworthy response, though the devil will undoubtedly lie in the details of whatever compromise Mr. Ryan works to hammer out.

In the meantime, Mr. Trump and Mr. Sessions owe the public a better explanation as to why the president rescinded the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which allowed young undocumented immigrants to work and live freely in the United States through renewable two-year deferrals of deportation. The administration's vague and haphazard account of the legal reasoning behind DACA's termination is far from a sufficient rationale for a decision on which so many lives rely.

Mr. Sessions [argued](#) Tuesday that the Trump administration was forced to end DACA after the Justice Department found the program unconstitutional. Yet what did the attorney general mean by

that? His [public statements](#) provide few details beyond pointing to general concerns about presidential overreach into an area of congressional authority and citing a court ruling against President Barack Obama's would-be extension of DACA [to parents](#) of U.S. citizens. Which actions does the Justice Department now believe Mr. Trump is constitutionally prohibited from taking?

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Likewise, if Mr. Sessions considers DACA to be unlawful, why is the administration allowing six months for the policy to [wind down](#) instead of halting it immediately? There may well be serious, prudential reasons behind this choice: An immediate rescission would have cast 800,000 dreamers suddenly adrift. Yet after finding the policy unconstitutional, Mr. Sessions should explain why the six-month delay is more than an effort by Mr. Trump to seek political cover for an unpopular decision.

Hours after Mr. Sessions's announcement, Mr. Trump [tweeted](#) that he would "revisit" DACA if Congress were unable to "legalize" the policy by March. It is unclear just what the president intends with this pledge. If he plans to reinstate or extend DACA, on what basis will he do so, given his own attorney general's determination that he lacks the necessary legal authority?

These questions may seem abstract when compared with the nuts and bolts of immigration legislation or the sickening uncertainty now faced by the dreamers. Yet the answers go to the heart of why these young people face uncertainty and what remedies Mr. Trump would have the power to offer should Congress fail to find a solution. Of course, it would be a mistake to hang too much on the words of this most mercurial of presidents. But having offered young immigrants a possible lifeline, the president has a responsibility to explain to them whether he is legally capable of following through with it — and why he snatched it away from them in the first place.

Editorial : Here's a solution to the DACA crisis: Pass a Dream Act. And soon

The Times Editorial Board

5-7 minutes

[President Trump](#)'s decision to end protections for immigrants who have been living illegally in the country since they were children was heartless, cynical and counterproductive. But there is one simple way for the damage to be undone: [Congress](#) should acknowledge its obligations to the 800,000 young immigrants whose status has been put in peril and pass legislation restoring their protection.

These are people, after all, who came to the country as infants or children through no fault of their own but as a result of decisions made by their parents. These so-called Dreamers have been raised and educated here, and many know no other country or language. Those who received protection under President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program had to show that they have no serious criminal past and that they are in school or have graduated or are serving or have served in the military. Why wouldn't we want to have such people living

and working in our country?

Obama sought to help them by executive order in 2012 only because Congress had consistently failed to reach agreement on a comprehensive reform for the nation's dysfunctional immigration system — or even to pass the more limited [Dream Act](#) to protect this particular group of immigrants. [Republicans](#) complained bitterly at the time that Obama's decision to bypass Congress usurped the authority of the legislative branch, but the reality is that Congress abandoned its own responsibility. If Republicans objected to Obama's actions, well, the fix was as simple then as it is now: Exercise authority. Pass a bill. But they're much more comfortable showboating than actually drafting, negotiating and approving legislation.

The California delegation — Democrats and Republicans alike — should be in the forefront of the battle to pass a Dream Act.

Now they have a second chance. Instead of missing it again, they should enact a version of the Dream Act that offers a path to legalization for people who have lived illegally in the country since being brought here as children, have not had significant troubles with the law and

meet other criteria indicating that they will become — in most cases, that they will remain — productive members of society.

The California delegation — Democrats and Republicans alike — should be in the forefront of this battle. After all, one out of every four participants in the DACA program is a Californian. With Trump stripping away their protections, their elected representatives should fight on their behalf. Los Angeles County alone has some 180,000 people eligible for DACA.

For instance, Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) represents part of the immigrant-heavy Central Valley and should use his clout as the second-highest ranking House Republican to pressure House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) to move legislation on this issue. McCarthy [signaled interest](#) in a tweet Tuesday saying, "It is Congress' role and responsibility to make immigration law, and I believe this is an issue that Congress needs to address." Representatives [Dana Rohrabacher](#) (R-Huntington Beach), [Mimi Walters](#) (R-Irvine), [Ed Royce](#) (R-Fullerton) and [David Valadao](#) (R-Hanford) issued similar statements.

We hope they mean it. If they're not sure whether it's politically to their advantage, they might want to recall the decade of damage the California GOP did to itself in 1994 when it supported Proposition 187, which would have denied public benefits to immigrants living in the country illegally.

The best solution, of course, would be for Congress to pass protections for Dreamers as part of a comprehensive immigration reform package that also addresses border security, reasonable immigration quotas and a path to legalization for the bulk of the 11 million immigrants living in the country without documentation. But partisanship and polarization make such broad but badly needed reforms unlikely at the moment.

That's not a reason to sacrifice the Dreamers. During the eight months in which the Republicans have had near total control of the federal government, they have done little to show the nation that they know how to govern, let alone lead. Here's a chance to put a thick and welcome mark on the positive side of the balance sheet. Pass a Dream Act now.

Former attorney general Eric Holder: The Trump administration's deep misunderstanding of DACA

By Eric H. Holder

Jr.

6-7 minutes

A demonstrator outside the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles on Sept. 5. (David Mcnew/Getty Images)

By Eric H. Holder Jr. September 6 at 10:57 AM

Eric H. Holder Jr. was U.S. attorney general from 2009 to 2015.

Our nation's sense of morality — and of itself — is once again being tested.

President Trump has scrapped the [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) (DACA) program, threatening to deport nearly 800,000 young, undocumented immigrants — [the "dreamers"](#) — and crassly justifying the decision by hiding behind a false interpretation of immigration law and our constitutional separation of powers.

DACA, which gave undocumented young people brought to the United States as children a chance to work and study here without fear of deportation, has been a dramatic success. The program provided a two-year grant of protection and a permit to work legally in the United States, after which enrollees were required to go through a renewal process. To qualify, immigrant youths had to meet a set of stringent criteria: When applying, they were required to have been enrolled in high school, have a high school diploma or equivalent, or have been an honorably discharged military veteran. In addition, they had to have lived in the United States continuously at least since June 15, 2007, and not have a criminal record suggesting they posed a threat to national security or public safety.

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In other words, DACA was far from, as Attorney General [Jeff Sessions](#)

[suggested Tuesday](#), an "open-borders policy" that admitted "everyone." To the contrary, it was a beacon of hope for a narrowly defined group who crossed our borders before they could have fully understood what a "border" was.

Of course, as Sessions emphasized, we are a nation of laws, and the immigration system is no different. We must ensure that our laws are enforced to maintain the vitality, prosperity and security of our polity. But in painting DACA as a flagrant disregard for our constitutional separation of powers, Sessions exhibited a fundamental misunderstanding of what DACA did. The program was based on the well-established executive-branch authority to exercise prosecutorial discretion in setting enforcement priorities. Rather than grant legal status, DACA simply deferred enforcement action against immigrants who met certain qualifications and permitted them to work lawfully in the meantime. And despite Sessions's suggestion that President Barack Obama departed

from established precedent in creating DACA, the practice of granting deferred action has been formally recognized as within the executive branch's authority since the Reagan administration.

But the Trump administration's revocation of DACA more than rests on legal misconceptions; it also is based on a misleading characterization of the dreamers. Sessions has justified the end of the program by suggesting that dreamers took jobs away from Americans and that ["failure to enforce"](#) immigration laws puts our nation "at risk of crime, violence and even terrorism." This portrait stands in stark contrast with the dreamers whom I, and many others, know, admire and love.

The dreamers I know are husbands and wives, children and parents, cousins and friends. They are business owners, neighbors and soldiers who fight for our nation. Their work in sectors from technology to law to finance continually betters our nation. They

are not and should not be defined by their immigration status. They must be defined by their character and contributions to this country, their devotion to our communities, and the dreams they espouse. Their America is our America. As [Obama has said](#), they are Americans “in their hearts, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper.”

We must look to the truth etched in our past and avoid a tendency to focus on short-term political impulses when it comes to immigration.

The New York Times

Masha Gessen

7-9 minutes

People in New York protesting the Trump administration's decision to end DACA. Todd Heisler/The New York Times

The terms of the debate over President Trump's decision to revoke the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program are familiar, as are the terms of the larger conversation about immigration in this country: On one side are hardworking immigrants; on the other are politicians who wrongly claim that these immigrants harm the economic interests of native-born Americans.

As protests broke out across the United States in response to Mr. Trump's move, reporters and immigrant advocates stressed that the administration's actions will hurt achievers — people who have graduated from college, people who have bought houses, people who work for high-tech companies.

There is nothing wrong with this story. It's one that most, if not all, immigrants like to tell about themselves — even if their actual story doesn't neatly fit the narrative. In fact, as [Hannah Arendt pointed out](#) in her essay “We Refugees,” written in 1943 at the height of the 20th century's refugee crisis, people whose stories fit the narrative least well — the most desperate and the worst-wounded of the immigrants — are especially invested in thinking of themselves as destined for success and, of course, as future loyal citizens.

But something goes awry when this becomes the dominant story told about immigrants in America. This has been happening for a number of years: The good people of America talk about immigrants as hard workers who conscientiously contribute to the economy. (I myself

Immigrants created the United States. Tenacity, entrepreneurship and fearlessness have defined immigrants throughout the centuries and serve as a common bond between my immigrant father and Trump's immigrant mother.

After immigrating to America from Barbados, my father served in the Army in World War II only to be refused service — while in uniform — at a lunch counter in the very nation he defended. Nevertheless, his persistence and unshaken belief in this country and the unique

have made it onto a few lists of exemplary immigrant success stories.) In fact, DACA was designed to reward achievement: to qualify for the program, an applicant had to be in school or hold a high school diploma or equivalent, or have been honorably discharged from the armed forces. Those who hadn't been able or lucky to meet those requirements were apparently deemed unworthy of staying in the country where they had lived since they were children.

When Mr. Trump issued an executive order banning entry by citizens of predominantly Muslim countries, [American technology companies responded](#) with a lawsuit in which they stressed that immigrants have founded and run many large tech companies. The revocation of DACA has brought forth similar — and much-quoted — [responses from Silicon Valley](#). When the president threw his support behind a reform plan that would drastically reduce immigration to this country, [editorial writers argued against it](#) by pointing out that immigrants benefit the economy.

These arguments usually begin by stating that America is a “land of immigrants.” This not only is an insult to Native Americans and the descendants of those who were brought to this country against their will but also constitutes a sort of sleight of hand. It turns the stories of individual immigrants into the “story of America.” It's one thing for individuals to base their sense of self-worth on their contribution to the American economy. It's quite another to claim that America values immigrants because of this contribution: This paves the way to thinking that America should make decisions about immigrants based on whether they benefit the economy. It can even reframe giving safe haven to the persecuted as giving jobs to the well qualified.

American opportunities made available to him enabled his son to become attorney general of the United States. That's the possibility that comes with immigrating to this country, the dream that this country fosters and has made real. Remembering these truths can help us avoid the self-inflicted wound that will be caused by turning away from the principles that indeed made America great — again and again.

I'm calling on all Americans to see and treat dreamers as our own,

because they are our own. Congress must urgently enact legislation to restore their ability to build lives in this country. States must resist Trump's inevitable deportation efforts. The private sector must come together to defend its employees. Americans must raise their voices — and use their ballots. If we are to remain true to our heritage and who we claim to be, we must stand with the dreamers.

Gessen : Immigrants Shouldn't Have to Be 'Talented' to Be Welcome

This is neither new nor specific to Republicans. Hillary Clinton's campaign promised comprehensive immigration reform that would “bring millions of hardworking people into the formal economy.” Bernie Sanders's platform promised to build an immigration system that would “match our labor market needs.” Responding to DACA's repeal, the Senate Democratic leader [Chuck Schumer mentioned](#) “hardworking” people whose “contributions are vital to our economy.”

But what's wrong with the decision to discontinue DACA is that people — not workers — will be deported. Lives — not careers — will be shattered. The problem is that it's inhumane. As long as politicians consider it necessary to qualify the victims as “hardworking” or “talented,” they fail to stand up to the administration's fundamentally hateful immigration agenda.

The reform package backed by Mr. Trump last month also claims to pursue economic aims. Neither Democrats nor Republicans — nor critics in the news media — have taken issue with this underlying premise: They have largely argued that the package proposes the wrong means for reaching economic ends. The plan would limit immigration to the young, highly educated and highly qualified. It would effectively stop immigrants from being able to bring family members to the United States. If an immigrant is but a cog in the economic machine, then what do parents, children and siblings matter? The logic is dehumanizing but hardly new or unique to the Republican Party. Mr. Sanders's campaign plank argued for preserving family-based visas in the following terms: “Family is integral to a worker's pursuit of happiness and economic productivity.”

Mr. Sanders's platform made the barest mention of refugees. Mrs.

Clinton's published program made none. Mr. Trump, of course, wanted to drastically reduce the already small number of refugees that the United States accepts.

Refugees don't fall into the economic logic of immigration. The argument for accepting refugees is not that *they* are good — for the economy, or for the country's ability to meet its international obligations, or even because they are good people — but that *America* is good. This is where the sleight of hand of turning stories of immigrant success into the story of America becomes dangerous. It's not immigrants' economic contribution that makes America proud; it's its adherence to the words inscribed inside the base of the Statue of Liberty: “Give me your tired, your poor/your huddled masses yearning to breathe free” — from the Emma Lazarus poem that the White House adviser Stephen Miller waved away last month during a news conference on immigration reform.

The controversy following Mr. Miller's comments [focused on the poem](#). But the argument for refugees is less poetic than it is pragmatic. As Arendt wrote in that essay, “the outlawing of the Jewish people in Europe has been followed closely by the outlawing of most European nations.” This was just a first step, Arendt wrote: “The comity of European peoples went to pieces when, and because, it allowed its weakest member to be excluded and persecuted.”

If immigration is debated only in terms of whether it benefits the economy, politicians begin to divide people into two categories: “valuable” and “illegal.” When countries make people illegal, the world comes apart. When we agree to talk about people as cogs, we lose our humanity.

Peter Baker, Thomas Kaplan and Michael D. Shear

9-11 minutes

President Trump and Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, spoke during a meeting with the congressional leadership in the Oval Office on Wednesday. Al Drago for The New York Times

WASHINGTON — President Trump struck a deal with Democratic congressional leaders on Wednesday to increase the [debt limit](#) and finance the government until mid-December, blindsiding his own Republican allies as he reached across the aisle to resolve a major dispute for the first time since taking office.

The agreement would avert a fiscal showdown later this month without the bloody, partisan battle that many had anticipated by combining a debt ceiling increase and stopgap spending measure with relief aid to Texas and other areas devastated by Hurricane Harvey. But without addressing the fundamental underlying issues, it set up the prospect for an even bigger clash at the end of the year.

In embracing the three-month deal, Mr. Trump accepted a Democratic proposal that had been rejected earlier in the day by Speaker Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin. Mr. Trump's snap decision at a White House meeting caught Republican leaders off guard and reflected friction between the president and his party. After weeks of criticizing Republican leaders for failing to pass legislation, Mr. Trump signaled that he was willing to cross party lines to score some much-desired legislative victories.

The deal to keep the government open and paying its debts until Dec. 15 represented an extraordinary public turn for the president, who has for much of his term set himself up on the right flank of the Republican Party. But it remained unclear whether Mr. Trump's collaboration with Democrats foreshadowed a more sustained shift in strategy by a president who has presented himself as a master dealmaker or amounted to just a one-time instinctual reaction of a mercurial leader momentarily eager to poke his estranged allies.

Mr. Trump not only accepted the spending-and-debt plan advanced by Senator Chuck Schumer of New York and Representative Nancy

Pelosi of California, the Democratic leaders, but also aligned himself with them on immigration. A day after [rescinding President Barack Obama's program](#) protecting younger illegal immigrants on the grounds that it went beyond a president's authority, Mr. Trump said he wanted to work with Democrats to legalize the program.

"We had a very good meeting with Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer," Mr. Trump told reporters after the Oval Office session without mentioning that Mr. Ryan and other Republican leaders had also attended. Regarding the immigration program, Mr. Trump said, "Chuck and Nancy would like to see something happen, and so do I."

Republican leaders looked grim but resigned afterward and attributed Mr. Trump's fiscal deal to a need for unity after Harvey struck Texas and as [Hurricane Irma barreled toward Florida](#). "Look, the president can speak for himself, but his feeling was that we needed to come together to not create a picture of divisiveness at a time of genuine national crisis, and that was the rationale," said Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader.

"Look, the president can speak for himself, but his feeling was that we needed to come together to not create a picture of divisiveness at a time of genuine national crisis, and that was the rationale," said Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader. Pete Marovich for The New York Times

Democrats were grinning at their surprise victory and happy to rub it in. "It was a really good moment of some bipartisanship," Mr. Schumer said. He added: "The bottom line is the president listened to the arguments. We think we made a very reasonable and strong argument. And to his credit, he went with the better argument."

Until now, Mr. Trump has sought to govern through the strength of Republican majorities in Congress, an approach that has not secured top priorities like repealing Mr. Obama's health care program. After castigating Democrats as obstructionists, Mr. Trump may now seek common cause on areas of mutual interest like infrastructure projects, immigration and taxes.

Soon after meeting with congressional leaders at the White House, the president boarded [Air Force One](#) to fly to North Dakota to

push for a tax overhaul. Among the onboard guests was Senator Heidi Heitkamp, the first Democratic lawmaker to join Mr. Trump aboard Air Force One since he was inaugurated in January.

The flight gave Mr. Trump an extended opportunity to woo Ms. Heitkamp, who faces a tough re-election battle next year in a state that gave the president [an overwhelming 36-point margin](#) during last year's election. As local lawmakers pointed out, Ms. Heitkamp may find it politically advantageous to cozy up to the most popular figure in the state.

At the event, at an oil refinery in Ms. Heitkamp's hometown, Mandan, Mr. Trump called her onto the stage with her Republican colleagues.

"Everyone's saying, 'What's she doing up here?'" Mr. Trump said as she joined him in front of an audience filled with Republicans. "But I'll tell you what — good woman. And I think we'll have your support. I hope we'll have your support. And thank you very much, Senator."

While Ms. Heitkamp can hardly afford to alienate Mr. Trump, she has been cagey about the tax issue. "It's encouraging he committed to promoting American workers as key to any tax reform policy," she said in a statement after the president's visit on Wednesday. "But, as North Dakota's former tax commissioner, I know the devil is in the details of any reform plan as tax codes are complex."

Mr. Trump's courtship of Democrats left conservatives miffed at a spending-and-debt deal they considered anathema to their principles. "The question of politics is, a deal to what end?" said Representative Mark Sanford, Republican of South Carolina. "I think all of us as taxpayers need to be very skeptical of deals for the sake of deals."

A trailer park in Beaumont, Tex., that flooded during Hurricane Harvey. The House overwhelmingly approved nearly \$8 billion in disaster aid in response to the storm. Andrew Burton for The New York Times

Representative Mark Walker of North Carolina, the chairman of the Republican Study Committee, expressed surprise at Mr. Trump's action. "I'm still processing this, but my first instinct is I'm not very happy about it," he said.

Conservative groups like FreedomWorks and For America expressed indignation. "This is straight out of the swamp," said Adam Brandon, president of FreedomWorks, "and I call on President Trump to say something publicly about how this is a swamp deal and will not be tolerated."

The agreement came as the House overwhelmingly approved nearly \$8 billion in disaster aid in response to Harvey, taking quick action to help victims of the devastating flooding in Texas. The aid measure passed 419 to 3. The "no" votes were Republican.

The House vote took place five days after the White House [requested about \\$7.9 billion in emergency aid](#). The vast majority of that money would go to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and \$450 million would go to the Small Business Administration's disaster loan program. And with Irma barreling toward Puerto Rico and Florida, more disaster aid is likely to be needed quickly.

Mr. Schumer and Ms. Pelosi pressed for a three-month deal to keep the government running and raise the debt ceiling along with the hurricane aid to give Democrats leverage later this year when other matters, including a longer-term government funding deal, could be negotiated between the two parties. By ensuring that all the pending issues converge at the end of the year, Democrats hope a longer-term agreement on fiscal matters could include immigration, health care and any number of other issues.

Assuming that he had the support of Mr. Trump, Mr. Ryan responded Wednesday morning by calling the Democrats' proposal "ridiculous and disgraceful," saying "it could put in jeopardy the kind of hurricane response we need to have."

"To play politics with the debt ceiling, like Schumer and Pelosi apparently are doing, I don't think is a good idea," Mr. Ryan said.

Once they arrived at the White House, however, Mr. Trump undercut Mr. Ryan. Congressional aides said privately that Republicans went into the meeting at the White House proposing an 18-month deal on government spending and the debt limit, only to run into resistance from the Democrats. They then proposed a six-month deal as a compromise, but Democrats insisted on a three-month agreement. Mr. Trump then surprised the Republicans by

agreeing to the Democratic formulation.

"We essentially came to a deal, and I think the deal will be very good," Mr. Trump said afterward. "We had

a very, very cordial and professional meeting."

The
Washington
Post

Trump sides with Democrats on fiscal issues, throwing Republican plans into chaos (UNE)

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

11-14 minutes

President Trump, a man of few allegiances who seized control of the Republican Party in a hostile takeover, suddenly aligned himself with Democrats on Wednesday on a series of key fiscal issues — and even gave a lift to North Dakota's embattled Democratic U.S. senator.

Trump confounded his party's leaders when he cut a deal with Democratic congressional leaders — "Chuck and Nancy," as the president informally referred to them — on a short-term plan to fund the government and raise its borrowing limit this month.

The president's surprise stance upended sensitive negotiations over the debt ceiling and other crucial policy issues this fall and further imperiled his already tenuous relationships with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.).

The episode is the latest turn in Trump's separation from his party as he [distances himself](#) to deflect blame for what has been a year of gridlock and missed opportunities for Republicans on Capitol Hill. It follows a summer of presidential stewing over McConnell and Ryan, both of whom Trump views as insufficiently loyal and weak in executing his agenda, according to his advisers.

Trump made his position clear at a White House meeting with both parties' congressional leaders, agreeing with Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) on plans for a bill to fund the government and raise the debt ceiling for three months.

The House of Representatives Sept. 6 passed a \$7.85 billion aid package for victims of Hurricane Harvey, though New York Democrats reminded Texans of how they voted after Hurricane Sandy. The House of Representatives Sept. 6 passes a \$7.85 billion aid package for victims of Hurricane Harvey (Sarah Parnass/The Washington Post)

Lawmakers on the House floor Sept. 6 urged their colleagues to

pass an aid package for victims of Hurricane Harvey, though New York Democrats reminded Texans of how they voted after Hurricane Sandy. (Sarah Parnass/The Washington Post)

That effectively postpones until December a divisive fight over fiscal matters, including whether to fund construction of Trump's long-promised wall at the U.S.-Mexico border.

"We had a very good meeting with Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer," Trump told reporters Wednesday aboard Air Force One as he traveled to North Dakota. "We agreed to a three-month extension on debt ceiling, which they consider to be sacred — very important — always we'll agree on debt ceiling automatically because of the importance of it."

In siding with Democrats, Trump overruled his own treasury secretary, Steven Mnuchin, who was in the middle of an explanation backing a longer-term increase when the president interrupted him and disagreed, according to a person briefed on the meeting who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity. Trump was "in deal-cutting mode," the person said.

[\[Schumer, Pelosi offer Democratic votes for Harvey aid if paired with short-term debt-limit hike\]](#)

After the gathering, McConnell said he would add provisions extending government funding and the debt limit through mid-December to legislation passed by the House on Wednesday providing \$7.85 billion in Hurricane Harvey relief. McConnell introduced the legislation late Wednesday night, setting up a Senate vote as early as Friday.

"The president agreed with Senator Schumer and Congresswoman Pelosi to do a three-month [funding extension] and a debt ceiling into December, and that's what I will be offering, based on the president's decision, to the bill," McConnell told reporters. "The president can speak for himself, but his feeling was that we needed to come together to not create a picture of divisiveness at a time of genuine national crisis."

Later in the evening, McConnell introduced legislation to extend current spending levels and the federal borrowing limit until Dec. 8 and increase disaster funding to

\$15.25 billion. The funding boost includes several provisions to address potential damage from Hurricane Irma, which is expected to make landfall in the continental United States over the weekend.

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) accused Democrats of wanting to "play politics with the debt ceiling" during a time of national crisis on Sept. 6. The country is slated to hit the debt ceiling at the end of September. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) accused Democrats of wanting to "play politics with the debt ceiling" during a time of national crisis. (Reuters)

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) accused Democrats of wanting to "play politics with the debt ceiling" during a time of national crisis on Sept. 6. The country is slated to hit the debt ceiling at the end of September. (Reuters)

During the meeting Wednesday, Trump also threw tacit support behind the Democrats' push for a "dreamers" bill that would effectively formalize an Obama-era program shielding undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children from deportation.

Trump on Tuesday began phasing out the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which GOP hard-liners regard as illegal amnesty, but suggested Wednesday that if Congress passed a dreamers bill he might sign it.

"Chuck and Nancy want to see something happen — and so do I," Trump said.

Later Wednesday, Trump brought a special guest with him to an oil refinery in Mandan, N.D., to pitch his tax-cut plan: Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, a Democrat facing a tough reelection effort in a solidly Republican state that Trump carried in 2016 by 36 percentage points. He welcomed Heitkamp into his traveling delegation, affording her the chance to appear bipartisan by standing alongside a president popular with North Dakotans.

As Heitkamp stepped onto an outdoor catwalk at the Mandan refinery to join him on stage, Trump delivered play-by-play commentary: "Everybody's saying, 'What's she doing up here?' But I'll tell you what: Good woman."

Trump opened his speech by recounting his "great bipartisan

meeting" at the White House. "I'm committed to working with both parties to deliver for our wonderful, wonderful citizens," Trump said, citing Schumer and Pelosi by name before mentioning the Republicans who were in attendance.

"Everybody was happy," Trump said of the meeting. "Not too happy, because you can never be too happy, but they were happy enough."

By setting up another debt-ceiling vote in December — a vote in which Republicans will almost certainly need Democratic help to avoid default — Democrats keep their seat at the table in this fall's key policy debates.

[\[Trump administration announces end of immigration protection program for 'dreamers'\]](#)

Had Trump sided with GOP leaders, Democrats would have been stuck trying to extract concessions ahead of debt-ceiling votes this week using an empty threat — voting against a legislative package that includes the politically sensitive Harvey aid. Democrats believe pushing the debt-limit debate into December will increase their leverage on several issues, including the protection of dreamers and securing funds to help stabilize health-care markets.

Schumer and Pelosi also gained an edge by giving Democrats an aura of strategic command they have lacked since Trump's election. Instead of McConnell claiming victory, it was Schumer who told reporters, "The nation can breathe a sigh of relief."

The deal may also benefit Trump by allowing him to revive his threat to shut down the government over wall funding.

At the White House, Republican leaders pushed for an 18-month debt-limit hike, then floated doing a six-month extension, according to two aides briefed on the meeting. But Pelosi and Schumer dismissed the six-month proposal, and Trump then agreed to the three-month hike that Democrats put on the table.

McConnell and Ryan came out of the White House meeting in the weakest position — losing an opportunity to neutralize the debt-ceiling issue before the 2018 midterm elections and to exclude Democrats from major policy debates this fall.

The president's decision came barely an hour after Ryan panned the idea of a short-term debt hike, accusing Democrats of "playing politics" with much-needed aid for Hurricane Harvey victims.

"I think that's ridiculous and disgraceful that they want to play politics with the debt ceiling at this moment when we have fellow citizens in need," Ryan told reporters.

Trump apparently disagreed.

"We essentially came to a deal, and I think the deal will be very good," Trump said. "We had a very, very cordial and professional meeting."

Not all Democrats were so thrilled with the deal. Some were upset it did not include protections for the estimated 800,000 dreamers.

"So Trump attacks our dreamers, and the next day the Democrats walk in there and say, 'Oh, let's just have a nice timeout,' while they're all suffering?" said Rep. Luis V. Gutiérrez (D-Ill.). "That is what is wrong with Democrats. They don't stand up."

Schumer said he was not finished advocating for dreamers. "This is

not a trade-off for us," he said. "This is a very important issue that we're going to fight hard for until we get it done."

The plan for now is to suspend the debt ceiling until Dec. 15 and then revisit it with a vote by Congress before then, but the Treasury Department would retain flexibility to take emergency steps, two congressional aides said.

The short-term extensions for the debt ceiling and government funding are also expected to further cloud the prospects for enacting major tax cuts, Trump's top domestic priority. They effectively mean spending and budget fights will continue for months, just as the GOP was hoping to coalesce around a plan to cut taxes.

Trump tried to rally support for his tax plan in North Dakota.

"Anybody that's going to vote against tax cuts and tax reforms — whether it's in North Dakota or anybody else or any place else — you've got to vote against them and get them out of office, because it's so, it is so bad," Trump said, pausing so that the crowd could cheer. "This is not a close one."

The White House meeting took place just as the House approved the Harvey aid package, its first major order of business after the August recess.

The measure — providing \$7.4 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency and \$450 million for a disaster loan program for small businesses — passed 419 to 3, with 12 members not voting. Reps. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), Justin Amash (R-Mich.) and Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.) voted no. It now moves to the Senate, where leaders plan to hold a vote by the end of the week.

[\[Recovering from Harvey when 'you already live a disaster every day of your life'\]](#)

Top House Republicans barely veiled their frustration with Trump's decision to side with Democrats on the debt ceiling. House Rules Committee Chairman Pete Sessions (R-Tex.) said he "would have not tied the knot so tight" for December, saying an extension till at least February would have been better, but he carefully avoided criticizing Trump.

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Your daily guide to the energy and environment debate.

"We all do it differently," Sessions said. "I think it was an overly generous answer that he gave our friends the Democrats. But I'm not going to be critical of my president. I support my president."

Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), the chairman of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, was among those who warned that Democrats' short-term debt-limit request could threaten GOP efforts to cut spending.

"Obviously getting a [continuing resolution] and the debt ceiling to not come due at the same time would be the most prudent fiscal decision we could make," Meadows told reporters.

Rucker reported from Mandan. Damian Paletta, Abby Phillip, Paul Kane and Jenna Johnson in Washington contributed to this report.

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POLITICO Trump's flirtation with Democrats makes Republicans nervous about 2018

By JOSH DAWSEY and BURGESS EVERETT

7-9 minutes

Does President Donald Trump want to wallop or woo Democrats?

No one seems to really know, and the answer could be key to his legislative agenda — and the 2018 midterm elections.

Story Continued Below

Trump's aides have teamed up with the National Republican Senatorial Committee to target vulnerable Democrats and plan presidential travel to help the GOP maintain its congressional majorities during the elections that are 14 months away.

White House officials, particularly political director Bill Stepien and legislative affairs head Marc Short, have had regular conversations with aides at the NRSC, according to people familiar with the talks. Internally, Trump officials have discussed the president taking trips to 10 states to push tax reform and attack Democrats in states where Trump enjoys wide support. Before he left the White House, former chief strategist Steve Bannon had also plotted with other White House officials about "tough votes" for

Democrats — and how to make them happen, a Bannon ally said.

Among the most vulnerable in the eyes of the White House: Sens. Joe Donnelly, Tammy Baldwin, Joe Manchin, Claire McCaskill, Jon Tester and Heidi Heitkamp.

But, as shown Wednesday, Trump is a wild card — and seems increasingly inclined to work with Democrats.

Trump took a soft touch during a tax reform event with Heitkamp, who is among the most at-risk Democrats in a state that Trump carried by 36 points in November.

It was Heitkamp who hitched a ride on Air Force One and appeared with Trump in North Dakota during a trip partially meant to target the senator, according to White House and congressional aides.

"She's a good woman," Trump said, leading her to the stage and asking her to support his tax plan. "You listening, Heidi? She's listening. She heard that. We're not going to put her on the spot. I'm not doing it."

Trump, who fashions himself a deal maker and who often cares more about personal chemistry than political ideology, has grown increasingly frustrated with

Republicans and has told advisers he believes he can work with Democrats on issues like tax reform and infrastructure.

He is tired of being associated with not much passing through Congress. Some of his advisers, like real estate investor Tom Barrack, Newsmax CEO Chris Ruddy and National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn, have urged him to strike a tone of moderation and remember his days as a New York negotiator, according to people familiar with White House dynamics.

"The President is committed to getting things done — tax relief for middle-class America, responsible immigration reform and making sure Americans are protected," said Sarah Huckabee Sanders, his press secretary. "He wants to work with Republicans and Democrats to move this country forward."

On Wednesday, he quickly took a debt and funding deal with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, stunning his Republican colleagues who argued otherwise.

"We had a very good meeting with Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer," Trump told reporters on Air Force One, explaining his deal and

seeming to forget GOP leadership. Trump appeared to give Schumer something of a man-hug in the Oval Office, as grimacing aides looked on.

Trump is expected to meet Thursday with a number of Democrats on a New York and New Jersey infrastructure project, including Schumer again, with Sens. Cory Booker and Kirsten Gillibrand, along with New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and other Republican House members.

Trump's light treatment of Heitkamp particularly frustrated officials at the Republican National Committee and NRSC, who have worked to attack the North Dakota senator, according to several Republican officials, describing private conversations around Washington.

They are coming to terms with the fact that Trump may not be a reliable campaigner — and some are freshly questioning whether he is even a Republican and is committed to helping the party, the officials said. Republican officials outside the White House were taken aback about the Air Force One trip with Heitkamp.

Republicans asking the White House for Trump to be more supportive of the party have

received something of a shrug, said two GOP officials describing private conversations.

Trump has not always relished travel if it's not about him. And it is more difficult to attack candidates when Trump is praising them, Republican officials say. "He has spent much of his time attacking Republicans," one prominent activist said. "It almost seems like he enjoys that more."

After he called on Sen. Claire McCaskill last week to vote for tax reform or lose her seat, some Republicans said privately they sighed with relief. "He went after a Democrat? Ooh, I'm astonished," said Sen. John McCain, an Arizona Republican. "I thought he goes after Republicans."

McCaskill said she skipped the event because she was out of state. "For him, that was not tough," she

said in an interview about Trump's attack, smiling.

For vulnerable Democratic senators, the Trump dynamic poses risks and rewards.

Tester, a former party campaign strategist, said "of course" he expects Trump to soon hold an event in Montana, but insisted it doesn't make "any difference whatsoever" on his reelection prospects or the prospects for backing tax reform.

"If he's trying to push me into going somewhere I don't know, if I don't want to go there I'm not going," Tester said. He said he'd consider taking a ride on Air Force One if it fit his congressional schedule.

Manchin, perhaps the closest congressional Democrat to Trump, said if it was a policy event and not a political rally, he'd attend a tax

reform event in West Virginia with Trump. Manchin is one of just three Senate Democrats to abstain from joining a Democratic letter asking the GOP to back off its current, party-line approach.

"He's always invited to West Virginia. I just think as an American, when the president comes and visits your state, they want me to be somewhere, I'll be there," said Manchin, who Trump has considered for Cabinet positions.

Appearing with Trump will probably draw Heitkamp more support than boos, said Marvin Nelson, who ran for governor as a Democrat in 2016 and was thrashed by more than 50 points. While no fan of Trump, Nelson said he was glad Heitkamp flew with the president.

"I would say anytime a North Dakota senator didn't get on Air Force One and share about our

state's needs, it would be negligent at least," Nelson said. "It would be silly to resist an opportunity to reach out and cooperate."

And Josh Holmes, a Republican strategist, said George W. Bush often used Air Force One to woo Democrats like then-Sen. Ben Nelson of Nebraska — and that if Heitkamp doesn't vote with Trump, he can still criticize her.

Heitkamp appeared on stage briefly with Trump, looking mildly uncomfortable — but shrugging and smiling nonetheless. She later issued a lengthy statement, saying the "devil is in the details" of his plan.

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Milbank : Nobody knows what Trump is doing. Not even Trump.

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

6-8 minutes

President Trump speaks Wednesday in Mandan, S.D. (Charlie Neibergall/AP)

House Speaker Paul Ryan could not have been more clear.

After meeting with his Republican caucus Wednesday morning on the first day back from their long summer break, he declared at a news conference that Democrats' call for a three-month extension of the government's borrowing limit was "ridiculous."

"That's ridiculous and disgraceful, that they want to play politics with the debt ceiling at this moment," he repeated. He called it "unworkable," said it would jeopardize hurricane response and called out Democratic leaders by name for promoting what "I don't think is a good idea."

Today's Headlines newsletter

The day's most important stories.

About an hour later, Ryan and other GOP leaders sat in the White House with President Trump, who told them he wants ... a three-month increase of the debt ceiling, just as Democrats proposed.

Such chaos and confusion at the highest level of American government hadn't been seen since, well, the day before.

President Trump met with congressional leaders from both parties at the White House on Sept. 6, with the debt ceiling and budget deadlines fast approaching, relief funds for Harvey aid being debated and another hurricane barreling toward the U.S. President Trump met with congressional leaders from both parties at the White House on Sept. 6. (Photo: Bill O'Leary/The Washington Post)

President Trump met with congressional leaders from both parties at the White House on Sept. 6, with the debt ceiling and budget deadlines fast approaching, relief funds for Harvey aid being debated and another hurricane barreling toward the U.S. (The Washington Post)

On Tuesday, even as the administration announced that it was ending protection from deportation for the 800,000 "dreamers" — mostly young people who know no country but America — there were signs that Trump had no idea what he was doing. "As late as one hour before the decision was to be announced, administration officials privately expressed concern that Mr. Trump might not fully grasp the details of the steps he was about to take, and when he discovered their full impact, would change his mind," [Michael Shear and Julie Hirschfeld Davis of the New York Times reported](#), citing an anonymous source.

Sure enough, Trump fired off a tweet Tuesday night that revised his position. He called on Congress to "legalize" the dreamers program and vowed to "revisit the issue" if Congress can't.

Even Trump's close advisers seem to have little knowledge of, much less control over, what he says and does.

Trump has signaled that he wants to end a free-trade deal with South Korea, even though his national security adviser, his defense secretary and the director of the National Economic Council all object. He and Defense Secretary James Mattis have contradicted each other about whether to talk with North Korea. Chief of Staff John Kelly's attempts to tone down Trump's antics have reportedly led Trump to escalate his attacks — on Kelly. Trump has publicly criticized Attorney General Jeff Sessions and repeatedly contradicted Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. Ivanka Trump and husband Jared Kushner have let it leak that Trump ignored their advice on Charlottesville and other matters.

One imagines a future scene in the Situation Room:

The president: Why don't we bomb Guam so the North Koreans can't?

The secretary of state: That's part of our country, sir.

President Trump's position on DACA has taken several twists and turns over the years. President Trump's position on DACA has taken several twists and turns over the years. (Meg Kelly, Claritza Jimenez/The Washington Post)

President Trump's position on DACA has taken several twists and turns over the years. (Meg Kelly, Claritza Jimenez/The Washington Post)

The secretary of defense: We have thousands of troops there.

The national security adviser: And 150,000 innocent civilians.

The chief of staff: It would be a humanitarian and strategic catastrophe.

Ivanka Trump: Please don't do this, Dad.

Jared Kushner: [Silence.]

The president: It's settled. We begin bombing in five minutes. Let's hit Hawaii, too. But not my hotel in Waikiki.

The unreliability of Trump has put an unusual burden on Congress, which is ill equipped to bear it.

Outside the House caucus gathering the morning after Trump's immigration announcement, Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa), an immigration hard-liner, angrily opposed legislative action for the dreamers, saying they can "live in the shadows" and demanding GOP leaders not "divide our conference over an amnesty act."

Minutes later, Rep. Mike Coffman (R-Colo.), took the opposite view, threatening to use a "discharge petition" with Democrats to force a vote on protecting the dreamers if the House doesn't act.

Ryan put the responsibility right back on Trump for the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) legislation. "We will not be advancing legislation that does not have the support of President Trump, because we're going to work with the president on how to do this legislation," he said. Sens.

Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) urged Trump to lead.

But what does Trump support?

"We love the dreamers. . . . We think the dreamers are terrific," Trump said last week, four days before putting them in jeopardy of deportation.

"I have a great heart for the folks we are talking about, a great love for them," Trump said on the same day his administration announced the end of protection for the dreamers.

What does the president want? Nobody knows — not his advisers, not his fellow Republicans in Congress, and probably not Trump himself.



E. J. Dionne Jr. : Trump offers us a glimpse behind the curtain. There's nothing there.

<http://www.facebook.com/ejdionne>

6-8 minutes

President Trump waves. (Pablo Martinez Monsivais/Associated Press)

One of the most cynical quotations in history is also one of the most widely attributed. Let's ponder the version associated with Groucho Marx: "Sincerity is the key to success. Once you can fake that, you've got it made."

From the moment Donald Trump opened his quest for the presidency, this idea has defined him and served as an organizing principle of his politics.

He presented himself as the guy who said whatever was on his mind, who didn't talk like a politician, who didn't care what others thought and who railed against "political correctness."

Today's Headlines newsletter

The day's most important stories.

In fact, just about everything that comes out of his mouth or appears on his Twitter feed is calculated for its political and dramatic effect. Trump is the exact opposite of what he cares about is what others think of him. So he'll adjust his views again and again to serve his ends as circumstances change. He's not Mr. Fearless. He's Mr. Insecure.

Putting aside the catastrophe of his presidency, this approach has worked remarkably well for Trump. But when the input on which he bases his calculations is garbled or

contradictory, he doesn't know which way to go. Lacking any deep instincts or convictions, he tries to move in several directions at once, an awkward maneuver even for an especially gifted politician. In these situations, Trump offers us a glimpse behind the curtain, and we see there is nothing there.

President Trump, during a brief news gaggle aboard Air Force One on Sept. 6, called DACA "a deal that wouldn't have held up." President Trump, during a brief news gaggle aboard Air Force One on Sept. 6, called DACA "a deal that wouldn't have held up." (The Washington Post)

President Trump, during a brief news gaggle aboard Air Force One on Sept. 6, called DACA "a deal that wouldn't have held up." (The Washington Post)

This is the most straightforward explanation for the fiasco created by the president's [mean-spirited decision](#) to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA. Trump was trying to square incompatible desires: to look super tough on immigrants to his dwindling band of loyal supporters, and to live up to his expressions of "love" (you have to wonder why Trump throws this word around so much) for the 800,000 residents who were brought to the United States illegally as children, conduct productive lives and are as "American" as any of the rest of us.

His solution is a non-solution. First, Trump showed how little he believes in his policy — of ending DACA but delaying its death sentence by six months — by having [Attorney General Jeff Sessions](#), the administration's ad

hoc director of nativist initiatives, make the announcement.

Trump shifted responsibility for his impossible political dilemma to Congress. It's true that Congress should have acted on this long ago, but Trump undercut his claim by not telling his allies what he wanted done. He was simply tossing the choices down Pennsylvania Avenue in the way a lousy neighbor might hurl unwanted debris into the yard next door.

And then, when the bad reviews poured in, Trump backed away from even his muddle of a policy. He tweeted that if Congress didn't act, "[I will revisit this issue!](#)" So a six-month delay might not really be a six-month delay. It might be extended. Or maybe not. Who knows? Adding an exclamation point to your waffling doesn't help.

The improvised character of the Trump presidency owes to his inclination to see politics as entirely about public performance. He cares above all about the reactions he arouses day to day and even hour to hour.

There is no strategic vision of what a Trump administration should look like because he doesn't have any clear objectives of his own. On some days, he buys into the Sessions-Steve Bannon-Stephen Miller nationalist worldview. On others, he goes with his practical generals or his business-friendly Wall Street advisers. He doesn't resolve the philosophical tensions because they don't matter to him.

All this underscores what a waste this presidency is. Trump's campaign was irresponsible in many ways, but it did highlight

problems our country needs to grapple with, particularly the vast gap in opportunity and hope between the country's prosperous metropolitan areas and its economically ailing smaller towns and cities. We are doing nothing to ease this divide, and the policies Trump does embrace by default (he goes with conservatives in Congress on many issues as the path of least resistance) may worsen it. Stasis also rules on health care and infrastructure.

The Trump administration is rescinding Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The Obama-era program granted two-year work permits to nearly 800,000 undocumented immigrants brought into the country as children. Here's what you need to know about the Trump administration's decision to rescind Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. (Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

The Trump administration is rescinding Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The Obama-era program granted two-year work permits to nearly 800,000 undocumented immigrants brought into the country as children. (Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

Those who condemn the fundamental cruelty of using "dreamers" to make a political point are right to do so. The mobilization for decency in reaction to Trump has already altered the direction of his weather vane. But there is a larger lesson here: It is a genuinely bad idea to elect a president who worries far more about how his actions look than what they actually are.



Fake Russian Facebook Accounts Bought \$100,000 in Political Ads (UNE)

Scott Shane and Vindu Goel

8-10 minutes

Facebook, already at the center of a storm over the role that it played in propagating misleading information during the presidential campaign, disclosed on Wednesday that fake accounts linked to Russia had purchased political ads on the social

network last year. Jim Wilson/The New York Times

Providing new evidence of Russian interference in the 2016 election, Facebook disclosed on Wednesday that it had identified more than \$100,000 worth of divisive ads on hot-button issues purchased by a shadowy Russian company linked to the Kremlin.

Most of the 3,000 ads did not refer to particular candidates but instead focused on divisive social issues such as race, gay rights, gun control and immigration, according to a [post on Facebook](#) by Alex Stamos, the company's chief security officer. The ads, which ran between June 2015 and May 2017, were linked to some 470 fake accounts and pages the company said it had shut down.

Facebook officials said the fake accounts were created by a Russian company called [the Internet Research Agency](#), which is known for using "troll" accounts to post on social media and comment on news websites.

The disclosure adds to the evidence of the broad scope of the Russian influence campaign, which American intelligence agencies

concluded was designed to damage Hillary Clinton and boost Donald J. Trump during the election. Multiple investigations of the Russian meddling, and the possibility that the Trump campaign somehow colluded with Russia, have cast a shadow over the first eight months of Mr. Trump's presidency.

Facebook staff members on Wednesday briefed the Senate and House intelligence committees, which are investigating the Russian intervention in the American election. Mr. Stamos indicated that Facebook is also cooperating with investigators for Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel, writing that "we have shared our findings with U.S. authorities investigating these issues, and we will continue to work with them as necessary."

Mr. Stamos wrote that while some of the ads specifically mentioned the two candidates, most focused instead on issues that were polarizing the electorate: "divisive social and political messages across the ideological spectrum — touching on topics from LGBT matters to race issues to immigration to gun rights."

Facebook did not make public any of the ads, nor did it say how many people saw them. But Mr. Trump regularly offered outspoken comments on those issues during the campaign, denouncing "political correctness" and rallying his supporters on the right.

Robert Mueller, the special counsel, is leading one of a number of investigations into Russia's role in last year's presidential election. Doug Mills/The New York Times

In its review of election-related advertising, Facebook said it had also found an additional 2,200 ads, costing \$50,000, that had less certain indications of a Russian connection. Some of those ads, for instance, were

purchased by Facebook accounts with internet protocol addresses that appeared to be in the United States but with the language set to Russian.

In a January report, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency concluded that the Russian government, on direct orders from President Vladimir V. Putin, was responsible for hacking Democratic targets and leaking thousands of emails and other documents in an attempt to hurt Mrs. Clinton's campaign and mar her reputation.

The report also found that hundreds of Russian "trolls," or paid social media users, had posted anti-Clinton messages. But it did not name Facebook or address the question of advertising.

The January intelligence report said the "likely financier" of the Internet Research Agency was "a close Putin ally with ties to Russian intelligence." The company, [profiled by The New York Times Magazine](#) in 2015, is in St. Petersburg and uses its small army of trolls to put out messages supportive of Russian government policy.

The revelations can only add to the political skirmishing in Washington over Russia's role in the election. Mr. Trump has often dismissed the Russian hacking story as "fake news" and bristled at any implication that Mr. Putin had helped him win. To date, while news reports have uncovered many meetings and contacts between Trump associates and Russians, there has been no evidence proving collusion in the hacking or other Russian activities.

Representative Adam B. Schiff of California, the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said in a telephone interview that the Facebook disclosure "certainly

quantifies the Russian use of at least one social media platform with a level of granularity that we did not have before." He said the committee has been in touch with Facebook for some time, adding, "I don't think this is the last word on the matter by Facebook or in terms of our investigation on the social media issue."

Mr. Schiff said he has more questions for Facebook, including when the company first become aware of the problem, what warning signs it found, how sophisticated the Russian operation was and what steps Facebook was taking to guard against such activity in the future.

"Clearly Facebook doesn't want to become the arbiter of what's true and what's not true," Mr. Schiff said. "But they do have a civil responsibility to do the best they can to inform their users of when they're being manipulated by a foreign actor."

The suspicion that Russia had a hand in placing Facebook ads was first mentioned in a [Time magazine article](#) in May, but Wednesday's announcement was the company's first acknowledgment of the problem.

Facebook, which offers a sophisticated level of targeting to advertisers, has been in the [center of a storm](#) over the role that it played in propagating false news reports and other misleading information during the campaign. The company acknowledged in April that fake accounts were a problem and said it accepted the intelligence agencies' findings on the matter, but it avoided naming Russia.

Mr. Stamos's post on Wednesday was more forthright, saying that the fake Facebook accounts connected to the ads "likely operated out of Russia."

After initially denying that fake news on the service had any influence on the election, Facebook's chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, has gradually come around to the notion that the company must do more. Facebook has implemented a series of steps to combat fake content, including recruiting outside reviewers to check out and flag dubious articles.

But the new measures do not directly affect Facebook ads. Advertisers pay to have particular Facebook posts displayed high in the news feeds of whatever group of people is targeted.

The audience for an ad can be chosen using broad factors, such as middle-aged American men, or very specific ones, such as mothers who live in Minneapolis and like churches and the Minnesota Twins.

That ability to target is valuable to political campaigns, and the company actively reaches out to candidates around the world to teach them how to use Facebook to get their messages out, including through paid advertising.

One question underlying the investigation of possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia is whether Russia-sponsored operators would have needed any guidance from American political experts. Facebook said that some of the ads linked to Russian accounts had targeted particular geographic areas, which may raise questions about whether anyone had helped direct such targeting.

Under federal law, foreign governments, companies and citizens are prohibited from spending money to influence American elections. Facebook's disclosure could add an additional element to the possible crimes under investigation by Mr. Mueller.



Russian firm tied to pro-Kremlin propaganda advertised on Facebook during election (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/PostRoz>
9-11 minutes

Representatives of Facebook told congressional investigators Wednesday that the social network has discovered that it sold ads during the U.S. presidential campaign to a shadowy Russian company seeking to target voters, according to several people familiar with the company's findings.

Facebook officials reported that they traced the ad sales, totaling \$100,000, to a Russian "troll farm"

with a history of pushing pro-Kremlin propaganda, these people said.

A small portion of the ads, which began in the summer of 2015, directly named Republican nominee Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton, the people said, although they declined to say which candidate the ads favored.

Most of the ads, according to a [blog post](#) published late Wednesday by Facebook's chief security officer, Alex Stamos, "appeared to focus on amplifying divisive social and political messages across the

ideological spectrum — touching on topics from LGBT matters to race issues to immigration to gun rights."

The acknowledgment by Facebook comes as congressional investigators and special counsel Robert S. Mueller III are probing Russian interference in the U.S. election, including allegations that the Kremlin may have coordinated with the Trump campaign.

President Trump has weighed in on special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election time and time again. Here's a look at how he can

limit the probe, and what Congress is trying to do about it. President Trump has weighed in on special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election time and time again. Here's a look at how he can limit the probe, and what Congress is trying to do about it. (Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

President Trump has weighed in on special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election time and time again. Here's a look at how he can limit the probe, and what Congress

is trying to do about it. (Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

The [U.S. intelligence community concluded in January](#) that Russia had interfered in the U.S. election to help elect Trump, including by using paid social media trolls to spread fake news intended to influence public opinion.

Even though the ad spending from Russia is tiny relative to overall campaign costs, the report from Facebook that a Russian firm was able to target political messages is likely to fuel pointed questions from investigators about whether the Russians received guidance from people in the United States — a question some Democrats have been asking for months.

Facebook reported in its blog post Wednesday that about one-quarter of the ads in question were “geographically targeted,” although company officials declined to provide specifics about what areas or demographic groups were the recipients. Of those targeted ads, the company said, more ran in 2015 than 2016.

Rep. Adam B. Schiff (Calif.), the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said Wednesday that the disclosure by Facebook confirmed one of the ways Russia sought to interfere in U.S. politics and serves as a “profound warning to us and others about future elections.”

“This is a very significant set of data points produced by Facebook,” Schiff said, adding: “Left unanswered in what we received from Facebook — because it is beyond the scope of what they are able to determine — is whether there was any coordination between these social media trolls and the campaign. We have to get to the bottom of that.”

The House panel, whose staff investigators heard briefly from Facebook representatives behind closed doors Wednesday, will follow up with Facebook and other social media companies and platforms to see “to what degree they are able to confirm similar metrics,” Schiff said.

An official familiar with Facebook’s internal investigation said the company does not have the ability

to determine whether the ads it sold represented any sort of coordination.

Who’s who in the government’s investigation into Russia ties

The acknowledgment by Facebook follows months of criticism that the social media company served as a platform for the spread of false information before the November election. In a statement posted days after the election, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg [promised to explore the issue](#) but said that 99 percent of information found on Facebook is authentic and only “a very small amount” is fake or hoaxes. In December, however, the company announced that [it would begin flagging articles](#) that had been deemed false or fake, with the assistance of fact-checking organizations.

Facebook discovered the Russian connection as part of an investigation that began this spring looking at purchasers of politically motivated ads, according to people familiar with the inquiry. It found that 3,300 ads had digital footprints that led to the Russian company.

Facebook teams then discovered 470 suspicious and likely fraudulent Facebook accounts and pages that it believes operated out of Russia, had links to the company and were involved in promoting the ads.

A Facebook official said “there is evidence that some of the accounts are linked to a troll farm in St. Petersburg, referred to as the Internet Research Agency, though we have no way to independently confirm.” The official declined to release any of the ads it traced to Russian companies or entities.

“Our data policy and federal law limit our ability to share user data and content, so we won’t be releasing any ads,” the official said. The official added that the ads “were directed at people on Facebook who had expressed interest in subjects explored on those pages, such as LGBT community, black social issues, the Second Amendment and immigration.”

Clint Watts, a former FBI agent who has studied Russian online influence campaigns, said

Wednesday that Facebook’s report served as “validation” for findings by him and his researchers, who he said had spotted what they believed to be Russians posing as Americans to press political messages on Facebook as early as 2015.

He said his analysis showed that Facebook ads in 2015 were largely concerned with divisive social messages and were used to identify other Facebook users most susceptible to messaging. Those users were then targeted with election-oriented ads in 2016, he said.

“We had these suspicions, but we could never see who was purchasing the accounts,” said Watts, a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. “Facebook’s being brave. They probably could have buried this, and they did the right thing by coming forward.”

Stamos, the Facebook security chief, said the company is committed to continuing to protect the integrity of its site and improve its ability to track fraudulent accounts. He said Facebook has shut down the accounts that remained active.

“We know we have to stay vigilant to keep ahead of people who try to misuse our platform,” he said.

This year, Facebook announced technology improvements to detect fake accounts and more recently announced that it would no longer allow Facebook pages to advertise if they have a pattern of sharing false news stories. Over the past few months, Stamos said, the company has also taken action to block fake accounts tied to election meddling in France and Germany.

The Internet Research Agency has received attention in the past for its activity.

In 2013, hackers released internal company documents showing it employed 600 people across Russia. Ex-employees who have gone public with their experiences at the company in Internet postings and in media interviews have said their work entailed creating fake Twitter and Facebook accounts and using them to circulate pro-Kremlin

propaganda. They said Internet Research Agency employees, for instance, spread derogatory information about Putin critic Boris Nemtsov in the days after his 2015 murder.

In 2015, [the New York Times Magazine reported](#) that social media accounts linked to the Internet Research Agency had launched social media campaigns in the United States, including a sophisticated hoax that spread false news of a chemical leak in Louisiana in 2014, apparently to sow chaos and fear.

Act Four newsletter

The intersection of culture and politics.

In its unclassified report in January, the U.S. intelligence community concluded that the Internet Research Agency’s “likely financier” is a “close Putin ally with ties to Russian intelligence.”

In May, Time magazine reported that U.S. intelligence officials had discovered evidence that Russian agents had purchased ads on Facebook to target specific populations with propaganda. A Facebook spokesman told the magazine that the company had no evidence of such buys.

Under federal law and Federal Election Commission regulations, both foreign nationals and foreign governments are prohibited from making contributions or spending money to influence a federal, state or local election in the United States. The ban includes independent expenditures made in connection with an election.

Those banned from such spending include foreign citizens, foreign governments, foreign political parties, foreign corporations, foreign associations and foreign partnerships, according to the FEC. (Permanent residents who hold green cards, however, are not considered foreign nationals.) Violators face civil penalties, as well as criminal prosecution, if they are found to have knowingly broken the law.

Andrew Roth, Alice Crites, Matea Gold and Ashley Parker contributed to this report.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Political Divisions in U.S. Are Widening, Long-Lasting, Poll Shows

Janet Hook
6-8 minutes

nation’s culture, economy and social fabric, and the polarization began long before the rise of President Donald Trump, a new Wall Street Journal/NBC News survey of social trends has found.

The findings help explain why political divisions are now especially

hard to bridge. People who identify with either party increasingly disagree not just on policy; they inhabit separate worlds of differing social and cultural values and even see their economic outlook through a partisan lens.

The wide gulf is visible in an array of issues and attitudes: Democrats are twice as likely to say they never go to church as are Republicans, and they are eight times as likely to favor action on climate change. One-third of Republicans say they support the National Rifle Association, while just 4% of

Updated Sept. 6, 2017 8:39 a.m. ET

Divisions in America reach far beyond Washington into the

Democrats do. More than three-quarters of Democrats, but less than one-third of Republicans, said they felt comfortable with societal changes that have made the U.S. more diverse.

What is more, Americans' view of the economy, the direction of the nation and the future has even come to be closely aligned with their feelings about the current president, the survey found.

"Our political compass is totally dominating our economic and world views about the country," said GOP pollster Bill McInturff, who conducted the survey with Democratic pollster Fred Yang. "Political polarization is not a new thing. The level under Trump is the logical outcome of a generation-long trend."

The poll found deep splits along geographic and educational lines. Rural Americans and people without a four-year college degree are notably more pessimistic about the economy and more conservative on social issues. Those groups make up an increasingly large share of the GOP.

One measure of how much more polarized the electorate is than a generation ago can be found in views of the president. Eight months into the 1950s presidency of Republican Dwight Eisenhower, 60% of Democrats approved of the job he was doing. That level of cross-party support for a new president remained above 40% until Bill Clinton, when only 20% of Republicans approved of his

performance after eight months in 1993. For Barack Obama, Republican support dropped to 16% at this point in his presidency in 2009.

Under Mr. Trump, that trend has continued and intensified. His job-approval rating among Americans overall has remained in recent months at about 40%, but just 8% of Democrats approve of the job he is doing, the survey found. By contrast, 80% of Republicans approve.

Mr. Trump's election has brought a sharp mood swing among Republicans. In August 2014, 88% of Republicans said they weren't confident that life for their children's generation would be better than their own, a gloomy view of a central element of the American dream. Eight months into the Trump presidency, just 46% of Republicans say they lack confidence in their children's future—a 42-point swing that is more dramatic than improvements in the economy would seem to justify.

The survey found changes over the years in attitudes on cultural and economic issues, such as gun control, immigration and globalization, that were key issues of Mr. Trump's campaign.

Views of gun rights used to be less partisan: Asked if they were concerned that the government would go too far in restricting gun-ownership rights or, alternatively, that the government wouldn't do enough, Republicans in 1995 were

about evenly split. Democrats were divided 26% to 67%.

Now, 77% of Republicans say they are concerned the government would go too far, and just 18% worry the government wouldn't do enough. Democratic opinion is the mirror image, 24% to 71%.

Views of immigration have also become more partisan. In an April 2005 poll that asked whether immigration strengthened or weakened the U.S., a plurality of 48% said it weakened the nation, with 41% saying immigration strengthened the country.

Now, a substantial majority of 64% view immigration as strengthening the country, while 28% say it weakens the U.S. The change is due almost entirely to a sharp shift in Democrats' views. In 2005, just 45% of Democrats said the country was strengthened by immigration; now the share is 81%.

Democrats also are now more inclined to see globalization as beneficial, compared with 20 years ago, when both parties had largely similar views of the matter.

Two groups in particular have a relatively pessimistic view of the economy—rural Americans and those with less education.

Some 43% of rural residents gave a high rating to their local economy's health, compared with 57% of urban dwellers. Among people without a four-year college degree, only 47% viewed the economy in their area as good or excellent, compared with two-thirds of people with a degree.

Both groups have been moving from the Democratic Party to the GOP.

Among people without a four-year college degree, a plurality of 44% identified as Democrats in 2010. Now, only 36% do. Among those who are college graduates, just 36% now identify as Republican, versus 41% in 2010.

While there is broad agreement that the country is riven by division, there is no consensus on why.

Fully 80% of those surveyed saw the country as mainly or totally divided. But Democrats and independents tended to see the division as rooted in economics—the income gap between the rich and the poor. Republicans saw the split as political, with people divided based on their party affiliation, and as a function of which media outlets they follow.

"It's as if everyone agrees that it's too divisive and we can't get along, but also that everyone else is wrong," said Mr. Yang.

The Journal/NBC News poll surveyed 1,200 people from August 5-9. The margin of error for the full sample was plus or minus 2.82 percentage points.

Write to Janet Hook at janet.hook@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition as 'Poll Shows America's Divisions Growing.'



Periello : Virginia needs a Truth and Reconciliation Commission on race

By Tom Periello

6-7 minutes

The covered statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville. (Steve Helber/Associated Press)

By Tom Periello September 6 at 7:34 PM

Tom Periello, a Democrat from Virginia, was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 2009 to 2011 and served as a special U.S. envoy to the African Great Lakes from 2015 to 2016. He is head of a Democratic political action committee in Virginia.

Virginia is the birthplace of American democracy, but it is also the birthplace of American slavery. We often hear our history described as a steady progress toward equality, but in reality, each

generation that has pushed for progress has faced violence from those who seek to preserve a system of racial hierarchy.

In the 19th century, emancipation and Reconstruction sparked lynchings and the Ku Klux Klan. In the early 20th, the emergence of a black middle class and an influx of immigration sparked Lost Cause Confederate revisionism, eugenics-based immigration quotas and the firing of African Americans from the federal workforce. In our own time, the election of our first black president unleashed a wave of white supremacy, including in my home town of Charlottesville, where armed protesters whom I interviewed last month described former president Barack Obama as a "national embarrassment" that they needed to "cleanse."

It is time we break this cycle. Virginia should establish a

statewide [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) on race that could bend this endless loop of progress and backlash into an arc of justice.

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Such commissions are not just conversations. They are systematic, nonpartisan public processes for establishing a common understanding of our history, evaluating how we publicly memorialize that history and tackling policy reforms that address the painful legacies of our past. Successful commissions spend a few years convening leading historians, community and moral leaders, former elected officials, and artists. They work across deep fault

lines of conflicting narratives to establish common ground and common facts.

Many great nations — including Germany, Argentina, South Africa and Canada — have used similar strategies to forge a path forward after periods of violence, division and repression. Initiatives here in the United States have proved promising as well, including the [Greensboro process in 2000](#) to review a 1979 attack in which members of the KKK killed five people in broad daylight and walked free.

Civil rights lawyer Bryan Stevenson has been building the South's first [memorial to lynching](#) as a teachable, interactive engagement with our past, and several localities in Virginia have launched [Hope in the Cities initiatives](#). This year, after neo-Nazis held their [first tiki-torch rally](#) at the Robert E. Lee monument

in Charlottesville, I [issued a call](#) for a comprehensive Virginia commission on race as part of my campaign for the Democratic nomination for governor, understanding from my past work on transitional justice abroad that hate left unchecked tends to escalate.

Much attention has been paid to the question of monuments, and these are often a component of such commissions. How we decide to commemorate and celebrate our history — and who gets a voice in the decision — [speaks volumes](#) about our present and our future. While I [support the removal](#) of most Confederate monuments, the process by which these decisions are made is as important as the outcome. The

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

4 minutes

Sept. 5, 2017 7:09 p.m. ET

American voters received yet another rude awakening last month. Chicago's Board of Elections reported that names, addresses, birth dates and other sensitive information about the city's 1.8 million registered voters had been exposed on an Amazon cloud server for an unknown period. Worse, it appears hackers might have gained access to employees' personal accounts at Election Systems & Software, a major election technology vendor—info that could be used to hack a future U.S. election.

Earlier, the Department of Homeland Security reported that foreign agents targeted voting systems in [21 states](#) in the 2016 election, and Bloomberg News [reported](#) that

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Kamp

6-8 minutes

Updated Sept. 6, 2017 5:05 a.m. ET

Hurricane Irma made its first landfall in the northeast Caribbean early Wednesday after growing into one of the most powerful storms ever recorded over the Atlantic Ocean, prompting evacuations in Florida and [disrupting air and sea travel](#).

The National Hurricane Center called Irma, whose maximum sustained winds increased to 185

highly charged debate cannot be avoided; the question is whether this discussion should be done through a shared, historically grounded process or as isolated (and often reactionary) proxy battles in the public parks and streets of our cities.

But successful reconciliation [looks well beyond](#) monuments to the inequalities and cultural divides produced by history, including statutes on housing, education and criminal codes. It must not just be top-down but also provide a space for painful memories to be aired.

We saw a glimpse of how this process can help — and what its absence risks — in the [first City Council meeting in Charlottesville](#) after the violence. The meeting was

Chertoff : Congress Can Help Prevent Election Hacking

Michael Chertoff

hackers had successfully compromised various election-technology companies.

In an age of unprecedented cyber risks, these dangers aren't surprising. But lawmakers and election officials' lackadaisical response is both staggering and distressing.

American elections are an increasingly easy target because our election technologies are antiquated, and we have few federal level cybersecurity standards. An estimated 43 states rely on electronic voting or tabulation systems that are at least 10 years old. A [survey](#) of 274 election administrators in 28 states found most said their systems need upgrades.

This is a matter of national security, and Congress should treat it as such. Given that we're still dealing with the [unfunded mandates](#) of 2002's Help America Vote Act, there's a clear need for action to

Hurricane Irma Makes Landfall in Caribbean

Arian Campo-Flores and Jon

miles an hour, a "potentially catastrophic" Category 5 storm. Irma is the strongest hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic basin outside the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, the agency said, and ranks among the five strongest Atlantic hurricanes.

The storm's center made landfall over the island of Barbuda early Wednesday, the center said. Heavy rain and howling winds raked the island of Antigua, sending debris flying as people huddled in their homes or government shelters, the Associated Press reported.

A hurricane warning covered an area stretching across a string of

messy and chaotic, but far less so than when we provide no such forum. Those who suffered at the hands of the forces of hate and breakdowns in protections from state authorities needed a forum to have their stories heard and to demand accountability. Reconciliation is not easy or pain-free, but it does provide an outlet for healing.

Virginia's history is full of contradictions. We hosted the capital of the Confederacy, but we were also the [first state to elect an African American governor](#). We produced the Declaration of Independence but also [shuttered public schools](#) before allowing integration. The modern Klan rallied in Charlottesville with local support, but I was proud to the point of tears

upgrade security systems and create meaningful standards.

This summer more than 100 experts on election administration, computer science and national security released a [plan](#) for Congress to safeguard the vote. The experts include Republicans and Democrats, united in the view that our current patchwork of voting-security measures is insufficient for the emerging threats.

Some in Congress are now finally paying attention. A bipartisan amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act from Sens. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.) and Amy Klobuchar (D., Minn.) would address the challenge in a way that's fiscally responsible, respectful of states' policy-making powers, and proactive in dealing with the most pressing vulnerabilities. It would limit access to election systems to qualified vendors, secure voter registration logs, help ensure proper audits of elections, create more-secure information

to see them massively outnumbered by Virginians of all races, faiths, generations and orientations standing up for racial justice and an inclusive commonwealth.

From tragedy, Virginia can lead again. We can heal through a statewide process that brings gravitas, methodology and inclusion to some of the most difficult questions our society must answer. These are the questions about who we are as Americans, how we got here and where we go from here. And they are about whether every American has a voice in crafting the answer.

sharing about threats, and establish proper standards for transparency.

This should be an easy bipartisan win. While many Democrats have been concerned about Russian hacking, President Trump has himself been a leading advocate for the most important security reform: a return to paper ballots as the record of voter intent. As the president said in an interview the morning of the election: "There's something really nice about the old paper ballot system. You don't worry about hacking."

The Chicago episode should be yet another wake-up call. We know what it takes to strengthen election cybersecurity. But we need to start taking the issue seriously.

Mr. Chertoff served as secretary of homeland security, 2005-09. He sits on the advisory board of the Alliance for Securing Democracy.

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition.

islands to the southeastern Bahamas.

Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló declared a state of emergency and activated the National Guard on Monday.

He said public schools and the University of Puerto Rico would be closed on Tuesday. The island's housing secretary said 456 shelters were available to take in more than 62,000 people.

In Florida, which faces the possibility of a direct strike from the storm, Gov. Rick Scott on Monday [declared a state of emergency](#) in all of the state's 67 counties. Irma could become the most severe

hurricane to strike Florida since Andrew tore across the state's southern reaches in 1992.

Carlos Gimenez, mayor of Miami-Dade County, said the county will begin evacuating special-needs residents Wednesday morning, and he closed county offices on Thursday and Friday.

While Irma churns toward population centers, forecasters are also monitoring Tropical Storm Jose, a newly formed storm in the more distant Atlantic. It could become a hurricane by Thursday. Early Wednesday the National Hurricane Center said a third weather system, Tropical Storm

Katia, had formed in the Gulf of Mexico and is expected to strengthen over the coming days.

Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine made a personal appeal Tuesday for residents and tourists to leave the island as soon as they could, in advance of what he expects will be a mandatory evacuation order from Miami-Dade County. The mayor said there are few roadways on and off the island, and he wanted to minimize congestion.

Officials in Miami Beach began distributing sandbags to residents on Tuesday, while supermarkets received a growing stream of customers stocking up on water, canned foods and batteries.

Authorities in Broward County, north of Miami, urged residents in evacuation zones to leave and stay with family and friends elsewhere. School officials in Miami-Dade and Broward also canceled school for Thursday and Friday.

In the Florida Keys, Monroe County officials said Tuesday they would be issuing a mandatory-evacuation order for tourists and residents, with the exact times still to be determined.

Mr. Scott activated 100 members of the National Guard on Tuesday to

help with storm preparation and directed all 7,000 guard members in the state to report for duty on Friday morning. And he told transportation authorities to suspend tolls on roads throughout the state.

The threatening storm caused cruise lines to cancel and divert sailings in the popular Caribbean. Airlines on Tuesday were canceling flights in the region and offering waivers to passengers in Florida.

Irma is forecast to dump up to a foot of rain in the northern Leeward Islands, with isolated instances of 20 inches. Drenching rains are also forecast for parts of Puerto Rico, the British and U.S. Virgin Islands and others, according to the hurricane center. The rainfall could trigger life-threatening flash floods and mudslides.

The Turks and Caicos Islands and southeastern Bahamas could see storm surges of 15 to 20 feet, as well as large, destructive waves, forecasters said.

The northern coast of Puerto Rico could experience a storm surge of 3 to 5 feet.

In Puerto Rico, which declared a form of bankruptcy earlier this year, the severe economic crisis battering the island could play a role in how

people experience the consequences of the hurricane, analysts say.

"The electricity infrastructure has been notoriously weak over the last year or so," said Vicente Feliciano, president of Advantage Business Consulting, an economics consulting firm in San Juan. He said the utility has had to reduce its capital and maintenance expenditures to make payments to bondholders.

Residents of Puerto Rico were bracing for significant power outages after the head of the island's electrical utility told a local news outlet that it could take three to four months to restore power in some areas.

In an effort to stabilize the island's rocky finances, Puerto Rico's government and municipalities have cut back on staffing in a wide range of areas, from utility crews to emergency personnel, said Edwin Meléndez, director of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College in New York. If Irma generates "the worst possible scenario, Puerto Rico might not be ready to weather the storm," he said.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said Tuesday

that it had staff and supplies, including water and meals, in place in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In Florida, Mr. Scott said he spoke Tuesday with state and national emergency officials, including FEMA Administrator Brock Long. "They assured me that Harvey response will not impact their response to Florida," Mr. Scott said.

The state is working on preparation, he said, including preparing 1,000 high-wheeled trucks to help with rescues and accepting an offer from the American Red Cross to send 1,000 volunteers to Florida.

Mr. Scott asked residents to stock up on supplies and make a plan to evacuate. "This storm has the potential to devastate this state," he said. "You can get new possessions, but you can't rebuild your life."

—Valerie Bauerlein contributed to this article.

Write to Arian Campo-Flores at arian.campo-flores@wsj.com and Jon Kamp at jon.kamp@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 6, 2017, print edition as 'Irma Gains Strength, Threatens Florida.'



This could be The Big One, again. Massive Irma slams into Caribbean, hurtles toward Florida. (UNE)

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

13-16 minutes

The Capital Weather Gang's Jason Samenow tells you what to expect from Hurricane Irma as it continues to barrel toward the U.S. mainland on Wednesday, Sept. 6. The Capital Weather Gang's Jason Samenow tells you what to expect from Hurricane Irma as it continues to barrel toward the U.S. mainland on Wednesday, Sept. 6. (Monica Akhtar/The Washington Post)

The Capital Weather Gang's Jason Samenow tells you what to expect from Hurricane Irma as it continues to barrel toward the U.S. mainland on Wednesday, Sept. 6. (Monica Akhtar/The Washington Post)

MIAMI — This could be The Big One, again, and everyone knows it, and if people here are getting a bit frantic, that might not be an irrational response. Hurricane Irma is about as big as a tropical cyclone can possibly get, and the latest computer models show it aimed at South Florida as if following directions by GPS.

There are more than 6 million people in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, all concentrated between the beach and the swamps. Many have been streaming north on Interstate 95 or Florida's Turnpike, and gas stations have plastic bags on the pumps. The region's airports were slammed, and it had become difficult to score a seat on any airplane, going anywhere.

"I'm nervous, and I never get nervous in storms," said Jane Llewellyn, a rental car sales agent at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport and a resident of Miami Beach. She said Irma seemed more "aggressive" than Andrew in 1992: "It's just so massive and it's just so fast, and it's just so hot here. It's going to get worse."

Irma is an extremely dangerous Category 5 hurricane that had sustained winds of 185 mph as it ripped through the Caribbean on Wednesday, battering the northern Lesser Antilles and Virgin Islands, and leaving nine people dead and dozens more injured in its wake. The storm next headed toward Puerto Rico, where some residents

are preparing to be without electricity for as long as six months. Although the storm's center passed north of Puerto Rico itself, the hurricane still delivered lashing rain bands, damaging winds and warnings of flash flooding.

[Extreme Category 5 Irma crashes into Caribbean, sets sights on Florida](#)

On Wednesday, Irma hit Barbuda in the Leeward Islands, territories and commonwealths stretching southeast from Puerto Rico. A weather station recorded sustained winds of 118 mph and a wind gust to 155 mph before the instrument failed, according to the National Hurricane Center, which called the storm's conditions "life-threatening." One death was recorded on the island and the country's prime minister said 95 percent of all properties sustained damage.

Irma was far more deadly on the French Caribbean island territories of St. Martin and St. Barthelemy. France's interior minister said at least eight people were killed in the storm and 23 others were injured.

This hurricane's 185-mph maximum sustained winds are the strongest recorded for a landfalling hurricane in the Atlantic Ocean, tied with the 1935 Florida Keys hurricane.

Irma has swelled into a monster force with maximum sustained winds near 185 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center. The storm is considered the most powerful hurricane to threaten the Atlantic coast in more than a decade. Irma has swelled into a monster force with maximum sustained winds near 185 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center. (The Washington Post)

Irma has swelled into a monster force with maximum sustained winds near 185 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center. The storm is considered the most powerful hurricane to threaten the Atlantic coast in more than a decade. (The Washington Post)

The National Hurricane Center said on Wednesday evening that Irma remains powerful and that Puerto Rico should expect hurricane conditions through Wednesday night and could see as much as 20 inches of rain in some places. The

storm is projected to pass by the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba in the next two days before it could make landfall somewhere in South Florida on Sunday, though intense winds could begin long before that.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, people in the Hato Rey neighborhood prepared for the storm under unusually calm, cool weather Wednesday that gave way to a light drizzle. People expect to lose power, which is nothing unusual for the neighborhood, where power often goes out for a few hours after a heavy rainstorm.

The power went out at about 10:15 a.m. on Wednesday. Even though her house was boarded up, Rita Hernandez could hear the singsong calls of "Yucca! Platanos!" from a *pregonero* — a roaming fruit and vegetable vendor — making what was probably his last run before the storm truly arrived.

With the storm still days away, it was relatively unusual for the people of South Florida to go into full-on storm preparation mode. But this is a scary hurricane at a moment when anyone paying attention to the news understands what a big storm can do.

[\[Airlines cancel flights as residents scramble to get out of Florida ahead of Irma\]](#)

On Virginia Key, at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, professor David Nolan was putting heavy plastic over computer terminals, in case the roof leaks during the storm. He said his family plans to drive to Atlanta, while he'll ride it out behind storm shutters at his home in Coral Gables. But that plan could change, he said. Lots of people are still thinking this through.

The mood in South Florida, he said, "is frantic."

"Anxious, frantic," chimed in his colleague, senior research associate Brian McNoldy.

"I saw a gas-station-induced car accident happen right in front of me yesterday," Nolan said.

How big is Hurricane Irma

McNoldy, who contributes to The Washington Post's Capital Weather Gang, called up the model forecasts and showed how Irma is expected to move in more or less a straight line toward Florida, west by northwest, but then hang a sharp right to the north. That track could send it right to McNoldy's cubicle and on up the Gold Coast, as if the storm were trying to grind away a century of urbanization.

"That's extremely bad," he said. "That's basically every East Coast

Florida city. This could easily be the most expensive U.S. storm if this happens."

He hastened to add, as all forecasters do, that a forecast four or five days in advance is typically off by something like 185 miles, and Irma could still veer west toward the Gulf or stay east and never make landfall.

But it could also go right up the center of the peninsula.

"We're surrounded by hot water," McNoldy said. "The state itself is not good at doing damage to hurricanes. It's flat. It's pretty wet, so you're not going to drag in dry air. They don't weaken much."

A man puts plywood over a window as he prepares a family member's house for Hurricane Irma. (Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

The Florida Keys are particularly vulnerable. Monroe County, home to the Keys, began mandatory evacuations of tourists and visitors Wednesday morning. The county's 80,000 residents were ordered to evacuate beginning Wednesday evening.

The main drag in Key West, Duval Street, was largely empty Wednesday. Many storefronts already had been sandbagged and boarded up. But some people will ride out the storm — as Floridians often do even when told they're supposed to leave.

[\[Home to Hemingway and lazy days, Key West girds for Hurricane Irma's wrath\]](#)

At the Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum, general manager Jacqui Sands said she's not going anywhere. She is charged with securing the legendary author's 19th-century estate as well as ensuring the safety of the 55 cats that roam the lush grounds here, many of them with six and seven toes on each paw.

"If I didn't have to, I wouldn't stay," Sands said. "My kids told me to get the hell out. But I have an obligation to take care of the building and the cats."

The petite 72-year-old will be joined by nine employees, four of whom she has sent off to retrieve storm shutters and plywood from a nearby storage facility to board up windows and doors. "They couldn't leave because either they don't have a car or couldn't find a flight out of here," she said. "I think we are going to be fine."

At the Key West Port, the cruise ships had long departed for safer docks, and the inlet was devoid of pleasure craft. Only four small

vessels remained in the marina, including a 50-foot boat that ferries residents and hotel guests to and from Sunset Key, a private, 27-acre resort located in waters nearby.

The ship's captain, William "Harry" Privette, 80, said he's never been caught in a hurricane.

"Every time, it either veered off or never arrived," he said. He hopes to keep his track record intact. "I know what happens when they show up. I don't want to be here when this one does. It's nasty."

Late Tuesday evening, some mainstays, including Sloppy Joe's, kept the doors open for dozens of stragglers tourists. R.E.M.'s "It's the End of the World as We Know It" blared through the speaker system.

Broward County Mayor Barbara Sharief said mandatory evacuations would begin Thursday at noon for people in the eastern portion of the county that runs alongside the Atlantic Ocean.

"This storm is bigger, faster and stronger than Hurricane Andrew," Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) said Wednesday, emphasizing that even with Irma's uncertain trajectory, officials were preparing for a direct impact. "Do not sit and wait for the storm to come. It is extremely dangerous and deadly and will cause devastation. Get prepared right now."

Scott, who earlier this week declared a statewide emergency, has warned that Irma could require large-scale evacuations and severely impact areas battered last year by Hurricane Matthew, which sent punishing flooding into parts of the state. A state of emergency was also declared in North Carolina and South Carolina on Wednesday. Shoppers wait in line for the arrival of a shipment of water during preparations for the impending arrival of Hurricane Irma. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel via AP)

Officials across Florida responded to the dire forecasts by slowly shutting down the contours of daily life. Schools closed; the NFL postponed the Miami Dolphins' season opener scheduled for Sunday; the University of Central Florida in Orlando, which could face punishing weather if Irma crawls up the coastline, moved a football game to Friday night; and the University of Miami — the Hurricanes — announced the cancellations of its football game set for this Saturday in Arkansas so the team doesn't have to travel.

Storm preparations also were underway at two nuclear sites in Florida — 45-year-old Turkey Point 25 miles south of Miami and 41-year-old St. Lucie further north

along the coast. They belong to NextEra, a utility with about 5 million electricity customers in Florida. NextEra said that it will shut down its four nuclear reactors before Irma makes landfall. That will reduce the heat in the reactors and the need for electricity.

NextEra also said that its reactors could weather a loss of electricity of the sort that caused a meltdown at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi reactors after the tsunami there in 2011. NextEra spokesman Peter Robbins said that the nuclear plants have diesel generators located 20 feet above sea level inside reinforced concrete structures.

People across Florida who planned to ride out the storm were clearing store shelves of water, food and supplies, and people trying to drive north had to search for gas — and hotel rooms. Many streamed to South Florida's airports.

At the Fort Lauderdale airport, Sandy Lukaszewicz of Deerfield Beach, Fla., showed the text she'd sent Tuesday morning to her brother-in-law in Indiana: "I'm scared but I don't want boog to know it. She's gonna witness mother nature's most powerful ocean churn."

"Boog" is her sister Karen Romanski, who had been visiting. They saw Hurricane Irma reach Category 5 intensity and early Tuesday decided to evacuate, going online to nab four tickets to Chicago on Southwest Airlines. They were evacuating their mother, Virginia Gay, 87, and her friend Thelma Leonard, 91, who sat patiently in wheelchairs Wednesday near the Southwest ticket counter.

"I've been through Wilma. I've been through Andrew. I saw what's coming," said Lukaszewicz, 56. She said she noticed the storm forming off the coast of Africa a week or so ago and thought to herself, "That looks like Andrew."

"I wish I could stay home," said Gay, her mother. But her daughters had been emphatic, telling her, according to Lukaszewicz: "You have no choice. We made a family decision. We're going."

National News Alerts

Major national and political news as it breaks.

The airport had been jammed since before dawn with people trying to get out of the state. Florida's peninsular geography makes flight the best way to flee an oncoming hurricane, but there are only so many planes to catch.

By early Wednesday morning, it was hard to get a seat on a plane

going anywhere. Seats that were available still for purchase at Florida airports were often exorbitantly expensive, in the range of \$2,000.

Some of those who were leaving said modern technology, and

modern communications, helped inform their decisions — and made them easier.

“Back in the 1800s, people wouldn’t have had a warning,” said Renee Gray, flying with her husband,

Mitch, to their home in Nashville after evacuating from Islamorada, in the Florida Keys, at 4 a.m. “Today we’ve got warnings, and we have to take advantage of that.”

Alvarado reported from Key West, Fla.; Somashekhar and Berman reported from Washington. Daniel Cassaday in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Angela Fritz, Jason Samenow and Steven Mufson in Washington contributed to this report.

The New York Times

Hurricane Irma, One of the Most Powerful in History, Roars Across Caribbean (UNE)

Frances Robles, Kirk Semple and Richard Pérez-Peña

8-11 minutes

Hurricane Irma brought howling winds and pelting rain to San Juan, P.R., on Wednesday. Alvin Baez/Reuters

*This is an **overview of Hurricane Irma**, reported by journalists throughout the region. To see their latest dispatches from places hit by the storm, go to our [live Irma updates](#).*

SAN JUAN, P.R. — Hurricane Irma struck the northeast Caribbean with terrifying force Wednesday, its battering rain and winds of up to 185 miles per hour [leaving a trail](#) of chaos, wreckage and flooding from Barbuda to Puerto Rico, before taking aim at islands farther west and, beyond them, Florida.

Already one of the most powerful storms ever recorded, Irma could become one of the most destructive as well, depending on its path, and officials from Turks and Caicos to Florida pleaded with people to heed advisories to evacuate to shelters and higher ground. The National Hurricane Center described the hurricane as “potentially catastrophic.”

The storm [made direct hits](#) on Barbuda, St. Barthélemy, St. Martin, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands, and raked the United States Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico with hurricane-force wind and torrential rain. Gaston Browne, prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda, said Irma had destroyed 95 percent of the structures on Barbuda, an island with about 1,600 people.

By Thursday morning, the authorities had confirmed that the hurricane had killed at least one person in Antigua and Barbuda; one on Anguilla, a British possession; and eight in French territory, which includes St. Barthélemy and the northern part of St. Martin. Another died in Puerto Rico while preparing for the storm.

Irma “will bring life-threatening wind, storm surge and rainfall hazards” to the northern coast of Hispaniola,

which includes the Dominican Republic and Haiti, on Thursday, the Hurricane Center warned. It will pass directly over — or very near — the low-lying islands of Turks and Caicos, a British possession, and parts of the Bahamas on Thursday and Friday, the center forecast, and push a storm surge of seawater 15 to 20 feet high. The surge could put large parts of the islands under water.

Across the islands that were hit on Wednesday, people posted videos and photos online of the hurricane’s fury: debris flying sideways in near-zero visibility, roofs ripped off structures, waves surging into buildings, downed trees and utility poles, and streets that had turned into raging currents carrying away cars and trucks.

The French interior minister, Gérard Collomb, said the four sturdiest buildings on St. Martin had been destroyed, “which means that in all likelihood the more rustic buildings are probably totally or partially destroyed.”

With phone lines and electricity cut in many places, and roads impassable, President Emmanuel Macron of France and other officials said it was far too early to assess the true toll, in either lives or property.

The aftermath of the storm will be “harsh and cruel,” Mr. Macron said after a crisis meeting at the Interior Ministry in Paris. “We will have victims to lament, and the material damage on the two islands is considerable.”

The devastating winds left many scrambling for safety.

Carmen Caballero, a 69-year-old retired doctor, was unsure at first whether to vacate her two-story home in San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico. It is made of concrete, but has a metal roof that she feared might be ripped away. Then the power went out, the pelting rain and howling wind began, and she could hear debris crashing into things around her house and see tree branches falling into the streets.

She packed some water bottles, nuts, medicines, linens and other supplies in her car and drove to the

shelter at the Roberto Clemente Coliseum. “All my neighbors left too,” she said over the phone from there. “I wasn’t going to stay alone in my house!”

In all, nearly a million people were left without power in Puerto Rico. On Culebra, a small, rustic Puerto Rican island east of the main island, José Pérez, the municipality’s director of emergency management, took shelter with about 65 other people at a public high school Wednesday afternoon. Like many people there, he said, he lives in a wooden home.

Registering at a shelter at the Roberto Clemente Coliseum in San Juan. Erika P. Rodriguez for The New York Times

“Right now we are feeling the fury of this hurricane,” Mr. Pérez said in Spanish by phone. “I was 13 and I obviously remember Hurricane Hugo, but this is something incomparable. This is something terrible, an experience out of this world.”

Kelsey Nowakowski and some friends boarded up her house on St. Thomas, part of the United States Virgin Islands, and hunkered down, listening to the howling and thumping outside. “Based on the water we took in we think there is significant damage to the roof but don’t think it blew off yet,” she said.

“We’ve all been in hurricanes before. There are five of us here, but have never felt anything like this before,” she added. “It feels seismic, it feels catastrophic.”

Alex Woolfall, a British public relations consultant who was staying at the Westin resort on the Dutch side of St. Martin, [posted a stream of alarming updates](#) on Twitter while taking shelter with other guests in the hotel’s reinforced stairwell. He described “thunderous sonic boom noises” and the “scream of things being hurled against the building.”

“This is like a movie I never want to see,” he wrote.

Throughout the region, communication was spotty at best; calls to people, businesses and government agencies — even the British Virgin Islands Department of

Disaster Management — rang without being answered, or did not ring at all.

“Stuff is flying around outside, and the visibility is down to about 20 to 30 feet, and we haven’t hit the peak yet,” Gerry Yandel, executive editor of The Virgin Islands Daily News, said in the early afternoon. Two hours later, calls to the newspaper could not get through.

A JetBlue flight from San Juan to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., was canceled only after the passengers — many of them trying to get back to their homes in Florida — had checked out of hotels and gone to the airport. The 97 passengers were taken instead to the Clemente Coliseum, along with hundreds of others seeking shelter.

“Tempers got a little heated; I had to control the situation,” said Carmen Yulín Cruz, the mayor of San Juan. “That’s like a spark in a gasoline tank. Five hundred people in one place: If one of them gets out of whack, it could have a ripple effect.”

She said the city was ready for whatever may come, having stockpiled fuel, ice and medication. The mayor said she, her family and their dogs would stay at the stadium, too.

“If they get wet, I get wet,” she said.

Irma hit just days after Hurricane Harvey caused record flooding in Texas. With [two other storms](#) now reaching hurricane status — José, trailing behind Irma, and Katia, in the Gulf of Mexico — meteorologists noted the unusual occurrence of three hurricanes forming at once in the Atlantic basin.

Hurricane Irma’s maximum sustained winds of 185 m.p.h. have been matched by only three other Atlantic storms; the last, Hurricane Wilma, was in 2005. By Wednesday afternoon, Irma had kept that wind speed for over 24 hours, the longest period ever recorded.

The storm first made landfall on Barbuda about 2 a.m., then ripped across several more islands without losing intensity, traveling west-northwest. Puerto Rico was spared the worst of the storm’s wrath as it churned past in the evening. The

center of the storm stayed about 50 miles north of the island.

Monroe County, which includes the Florida Keys, issued a mandatory evacuation order on Wednesday. Broward County, which includes Fort Lauderdale, advised people to

evacuate some areas. In South Florida, which has millions of people and only two major highways, Interstates 95 and 75, to take people farther north, traffic and fuel shortages were already becoming

problems as people tried to get out of the storm's path.

Even so, more [evacuation orders and advisories](#) are expected in other parts of the region, and officials urged people to follow

them, assuring the public that plenty of shelter space will be available.

"I cannot stress this enough," Gov. Rick Scott said. "Do not ignore evacuation orders. We can rebuild your home but we cannot rebuild your life."

The New York Times (online) Hurricane Irma Reaches Puerto Rico: 'There Is Nothing Like This'

The New York Times

14-17 minutes

Hurricane Irma Pummels Caribbean

One of the strongest Atlantic storms ever recorded has already caused damage on several islands.

By CAMILLA SCHICK and ROBIN LINDSAY on September 6, 2017. Photo by Rinsy Xiang/RCI Guadeloupe, via Agence France-Presse — Getty Images. [Watch in Times Video »](#)

This is Wednesday's storm coverage. [Read the latest on Hurricane Irma »](#)

• Hurricane Irma, one of the strongest storms ever recorded in the Atlantic, hit the eastern Caribbean on Wednesday with winds of up to 185 miles an hour, but had slowed to 180 m.p.h. by Thursday morning.

• The Category 5 storm leveled [Barbuda](#), damaging 95 percent of its buildings and leaving the island "barely habitable." It has since begun lashing Puerto Rico and is also threatening [havoc and destruction](#) in the Virgin Islands, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and [Cuba](#). The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands will also be at risk on Thursday.

• The French interior minister, Gerard Collomb, said at least eight people had been killed in French Caribbean territory, and at least three deaths were reported elsewhere. The authorities warned that the toll would rise as communications improved.

• President Trump declared a state of emergency in Florida, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. The storm is expected to reach Florida early on Saturday, potentially causing catastrophic flooding.

'Barbuda is literally rubble,' but Antigua is spared.

Early on Wednesday, Prime Minister Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda said his nation had been spared the worst of the hurricane, declaring in a statement,

"The essential point is that our main infrastructure has stood up and our country can resume normal life within hours." He went so far as to add, "I dare to say that no other country in the Caribbean would have been as well prepared as we were."

This turned out to be stunningly inaccurate: While the damage in Antigua was not as severe as expected, Mr. Browne announced in the afternoon that 95 percent of all structures on its sister island, Barbuda, had been damaged or destroyed, rendering the island "barely habitable." A telecommunications tower was broken in two. At least one person, an infant, was killed.

Barbuda, home to about 1,600 people (3 percent of the country's population), "is literally rubble," the prime minister told ABS TV/Radio Antigua.

Devastation in Barbuda

The prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne, described how the island of Barbuda was nearly leveled by Hurricane Irma.

By ABS TELEVISION ANTIGUA on September 6, 2017. .

In his initial statement Wednesday morning, Mr. Browne suggested he had been receiving reports from Barbuda. But he later clarified that, in fact, the storm had knocked out all official communication systems on the island, rendering officials there unreachable after the storm. As a result, it was not until the afternoon, when the prime minister surveyed Barbuda from the air, that the extent of the devastation became clear.

"What I saw was heart-wrenching — I mean, absolutely devastating," Mr. Browne told ABS TV afterward, estimating that it would take at least \$150 million to return the island to some semblance of normalcy.

"Hurricane Irma would have been easily the most powerful hurricane to have stormed through the Caribbean," he said, "and it is extremely unfortunate that Barbuda was right in its path."

Mr. Browne said he had been caught off guard by the utter destruction in Barbuda because it is so close to the comparatively unscathed Antigua. The islands are less than 40 miles apart.

— CARL JOSEPH, KIRK SEMPLE and MAGGIE ASTOR

'Considerable' damage in the French Caribbean.

President Emmanuel Macron of France said on Wednesday evening that it was too early to say how badly the islands of St. Martin and St. Barthélemy had been damaged or how many casualties there were. But French officials reported that the death toll was at least two, and Mr. Macron said the aftermath would be "harsh and cruel."

"We will have victims to lament, and the material damage on the two islands is considerable," he said after a crisis meeting in Paris, adding that the "entire nation" stood beside the inhabitants of the islands.

Mr. Macron said that emergency services were focusing on re-establishing contact with the affected areas and that rescue operations would be coordinated from the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, where the French minister for overseas territories, Annick Girardin, was headed on Wednesday evening.

Hurricane Irma hit San Juan, P.R., on Wednesday. Alvin Baez/Reuters

— AURELIEN BREEDEN

In the Virgin Islands, 'it feels seismic.'

Javorn Micheal Fahie, a taxi driver in Tortola, in the British Virgin Islands, said most of the galvanized steel roofs in his neighborhood had blown off. He saw two of them, from houses facing him, flying away in the wind.

"Oh boy," he said in an internet phone call from his concrete house in the Johnson's Ghut area of the island, where he had been riding out the storm all day and posting videos of it [on his Facebook page](#). "A lot of wind and rain."

"All the trees around us have no leaves," he added. "Everything is empty."

Late on Wednesday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency tweeted a photo from a resident of St. Thomas, in the United States Virgin Islands.

Earlier in the day, Kelsey Nowakowski, who lives in St. Thomas, described how she and four friends had hunkered down and waited for the storm to pass.

"We've all been in hurricanes before, but have never felt anything like this before," Ms. Nowakowski said in a message via Twitter. "It feels seismic, it feels catastrophic."

— RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA and KIRK SEMPLE

In Puerto Rico, fears of rising waters.

The sea rose in Fajardo, P.R., on Tuesday. The island's governor warned that flooding was a concern. Ricardo Arduengo/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Gov. Ricardo A. Rosselló said at a televised briefing on Wednesday that six to eight inches of rain were expected in Puerto Rico, with some areas receiving up to 12 inches.

"As the history with Harvey states," he said, referring to the hurricane that battered Houston, "flooding can become the major cause of death in events of this nature."

With the storm expected to pass just north of San Juan between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., the governor had cautioned people to take shelter by noon in homes or in one of 156 government-run facilities. He warned that the authorities would suspend rescues once winds reached 50 m.p.h.

Carmen Caballero, 69, hastily packed supplies and rushed to the nearest government shelter in San Juan around 3 p.m., after the power went out in her home and branches began to fall. As a retired doctor, she said she had offered her services to other evacuees, including two people with Alzheimer's and some children with autism.

Nearly 30 years ago, Puerto Rico was hit hard by Hurricane Hugo, which [left more than 28,000 residents homeless](#). But Abigail Acevedo, 60, who survived Hugo, said Irma was worse.

"This is phenomenal," Mr. Acevedo said in a phone interview. "There is nothing like this."

Officials warned that the island's fragile electrical grid could be shut down for months in some areas. The Puerto Rico electric company said nearly 300,000 people had lost power by early Wednesday afternoon. More than 4,000 had lost water service, mostly because of power failures. The governor has asked the Defense Department to activate the Army National Guard for recovery efforts once the storm passes.

The hurricane could hardly have come at a worse time for the territory, which is in the throes of an [economic crisis](#) and does not have money for rebuilding.

— *FRANCES ROBLES and LUIS FERRÉ-SADURNI*

St. Martin's 'most durable' buildings are destroyed.

The French interior minister, Gérard Collomb, said the four "most durable" buildings on St. Martin had been destroyed.

President Trump owns a property there, Le Château des Palmiers, a walled waterfront estate that is currently up for sale. It is unclear whether that property was damaged.

Power was out on St. Barthélemy, and many roofs had been blown off, according to a statement from the prefecture on the French island of

Guadeloupe.

The situation on St. Martin was similar: There was no power, the fire station was flooded, and the police station no longer had a roof. The island's administrative offices were also "partially destroyed," the statement from Guadeloupe said, adding that the staff had taken shelter in a concrete room.

Live footage as Hurricane Irma destroys Maho Beach Cam in St Maarten 9/6/2017 Video by PTZtv

By midmorning on Wednesday, the hurricane was "pounding" the island nation of Anguilla, according to the National Hurricane Center. An officer who answered the phone at the Royal Anguilla Police Force headquarters said that one person had died in the territory.

Alex Woolfall, a British public relations consultant, was staying at The Westin St. Maarten resort in St. Martin when the storm made landfall early Wednesday. Mr. Woolfall tweeted updates during the storm before the power eventually went out.

— *AURELIEN BREEDEN and KIRK SEMPLE*

Evacuations in the Bahamas.

Hundreds of evacuees from the southern Bahamas began arriving in the capital, Nassau, a day after Prime Minister Hubert Minnis urged them "not to be foolish and try to brave out this monster storm."

Marionette Simmons, 60, who left the Inagua district with three of her grandchildren, said she had stayed put during Hurricane Ike in 2008 and "wasn't going to take that chance again."

"My life is more important than anything I might have left behind," Ms. Simmons said.

Dion Foulkes — the Bahamas' labor and consumer affairs minister, who is coordinating the evacuations — said that only about 200 people had chosen to stay on the islands, which will most likely start to feel the effects of Irma on Thursday evening. Earnel Brown, who owns a small hotel in Pirates Well on the island of Mayaguana, is one of them.

"I am a person of tremendous faith, and I believe that things don't just happen, they happen for a reason," Mr. Brown, 54, said. "I believe everything is meticulously planned by God. I am not worried at all."

— *ERICA WELLS*

Florida is taking no chances.

In Miami-Dade County, memories of the damage caused in 1992 by [Hurricane Andrew](#), a Category 5 storm, spurred residents to prepare for Hurricane Irma earlier than usual.

Most projections have Irma slamming into the state by Sunday, although it is unclear where it might make landfall.

On Wednesday, [Mr. Trump tweeted](#): "Watching hurricane closely. My team, which has done, and is doing, such a good job in Texas, is already in Florida. No rest for the weary!"

Gov. Rick Scott activated the state National Guard and declared a state of emergency across Florida. At a news conference, he urged residents to heed evacuation advisories and to act while the storm is still days away. Irma, he

said, is more powerful and dangerous than Andrew.

"Know your evacuation zone," he said. "Listen to your locals. This storm has the potential to devastate the state. Take it seriously."

The governor said 1,000 National Guard troops would be on duty by Wednesday night, and ordered most state government offices closed on Friday. He urged people to stock up on basics and refill their prescriptions, and said the state was working to address shortages of fuel and bottled water.

Purchasing plywood in Miami on Wednesday to prepare for Hurricane Irma. Most projections have the storm arriving in Florida by Sunday. Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Evacuation orders for Miami-Dade County were expected Wednesday or early Thursday, Mayor Carlos Gimenez said, as a precaution for what is expected to be unprecedented coastal flooding. The county plans to open shelters on Wednesday, and ordered schools closed on Thursday.

The Florida Keys were under a mandatory evacuation order: Wednesday morning for visitors and Wednesday evening for residents. The islands' three hospitals began evacuating patients on Tuesday.

Hurricane Harvey was weighing heavily on people's minds. "I think because of Texas, people are freaking out," said Yoseyn Ramos, 24, a Miami resident who said she was worried because she could not find gas anywhere.



TODAY

5-6 minutes

Editorial : Hurricanes Harvey and Irma stir debate on development

The Editorial Board, USA

absorb water left Houston and its sprawling suburbs all the more vulnerable when Hurricane Harvey deluged the region with record-shattering rains.

OPPOSING VIEW: [Houston land use gets a bad rap again](#)

To be sure, no city — regardless of planning or natural buffers — could have withstood such an onslaught of water without flooding. Harvey dropped an average [36 inches of rain over five days](#) and nearly 50 inches in a few places.

But the damage didn't have to be a bad as it was, nor should Houstonians have had to suffer through [two other crippling floods](#) since Memorial Day in 2015.

Houston starts with some natural deficits. It's flat. It's rainy. It has hard clay soil, which doesn't easily

absorb water. All the more reason to employ well-known strategies to minimize flooding. Instead, such strategies were mostly ignored during a decades-long building binge that turned the [Houston metropolitan area](#) into the 5th largest in the United States, home to nearly 6.7 million people.

Also disregarded was a 1996 report by county engineers, unearthed this week by *The Dallas Morning News*. The report warned that [Houston's two huge reservoirs](#), if not upgraded or provided with new underground drainage, would someday add to flooding. And that's precisely what happened during Harvey. When the reservoirs threatened to overflow, federal authorities opened the floodgates, releasing a torrent into nearby neighborhoods.

Defenders of Houston's relentless growth dismiss scientists and engineers who champion new approaches as anti-growth, zoning elitists who look down on Houston's boomtown building style. But most critics aren't against all growth. They're in favor of *smarter* growth, which requires new building strategies.

Among the most urgent:

- **Respecting nature.** As developers have ranged farther from Houston's center looking for cheap land, they've built over prairies and freshwater wetlands, which absorb water. Roofs, pavements, roads, malls and parking lots have replaced these natural sponges, forcing more runoff that flows

downstream to other developments and the city. According to a Texas A&M analysis, from 1992 to 2010, Harris County, which contains almost all of Houston, [lost 15,855 acres of wetlands](#) — an area nearly 19 times the size of New York's Central Park. To change this pattern, "I would not advocate zoning," says land use expert Samuel Brody of Texas A&M. "We need to grow ... with more common sense."

In New Orleans, the answer was rebuilding levees and erecting huge barriers to keep out storm surges.

In Houston, for a storm like Harvey, "it is more about building places for the water to go," says Rice University engineering professor Phil Bedient. Residents of the sprawling metropolitan area will have to learn that working with, not against, nature can make floods less frequent and far less catastrophic.

That's a lesson not just for Houston but for cities in the path of Hurricane Irma as well.

- **Building drainage.** New communities need to include more detention ponds and open green spaces, such as parks or golf courses, to contain runoff. This lessens flooding not only in those developments but also in other communities downstream. Houston officials for too long failed to put in tough regulations to [require more drainage](#), and when they finally did, some were ignored by developers, according to a *Houston Chronicle* analysis. The metro area can no longer count on its [22 bayous and two reservoirs](#), which were built or last expanded more than four decades ago and were easily overwhelmed by Harvey's rains.
- **Getting out of harm's way.** Smarter land use, more water storage and an ongoing project to expand one of the major bayous will get Houston only part of the way toward safety. Government officials will need to champion buyouts of homes and other properties that have flooded repeatedly to get people out of harm's way and make room for more open spaces. The biggest obstacles? Few homeowners want *their* home to be the one that goes. And few politicians want to take the risk of alienating voters. The process requires political courage and monetary incentives.

Getting Houston's leaders, developers and even some residents to buy into such changes won't be easy, but without them the city's future growth will be at risk.