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FRANCE – EUROPE



Why strikes and poor polling aren't derailing Macron's reform plans

The Christian Science Monitor
6-7 minutes

September 14, 2017 Paris—Remy Pichon joined tens of thousands on the streets of France this week to protest President Emmanuel Macron's labor reform. They opened the first front in a battle whose outcome could reshape the French economy, or keep things largely as they already are.

Mr. Pichon's positioning is clear. "We are here to protect a century of workers' rights that we have earned," says the laboratory

technician, who missed a day of pay to march down the tree-lined boulevards of Paris.

But if Pichon's rhetoric, and the sea of placards, pins, and posters, is a familiar scene, even the most fervent protesters aren't sure if the fight will follow the conventional playbook.

The strikes that started Tuesday – and will continue later this month to oppose Mr. Macron's attempt to make hiring and firing more flexible, a goal that's eluded his predecessors – were smaller, and narrower in scope, than previous protests. And even as Macron's popularity has waned – and perhaps

because of it – he appears to be looking beyond public opinion to prove that he's the one who can finally liberalize France's economy.

"I really think Emmanuel Macron is going 'Thatcher-style' on this," says Thomas Guénolé, a professor of politics at Sciences Po in Paris. "That is why I think the social movement and political movement will defeat him only if they go for a long, tough mobilization."

Demonstrators in Paris hold placards with portraits of French President Emmanuel Macron and the slogan "Clear out" during a national strike and protest against

the government's labor reforms on Sept.12.

Dr. Guénolé says all eyes need to stay focused on the street. "Will it or will it not be on fire? That's the only question," he says.

So far it is not. The front page of Wednesday's Le Parisien read, "First round, Macron."

Fulfilling promises

Pierre Gattaz, head of France's small and medium-sized business federation, told foreign journalists this summer that he expected strikes to be smaller because Macron is carrying out campaign promises made during presidential

and subsequent legislative elections, where his party won a large majority.

In short, Macron promised to move fast on labor reform to spur investment and reduce unemployment that has stood above 9 percent for nearly a decade. "He has been elected on a program that he explained for weeks and months," Mr. Gattaz says, "so he has the legitimacy of the election."

Perhaps more crucially, he also negotiated for weeks with unions over the summer to come up with proposals that ultimately kept two of the three biggest unions off the street Tuesday and the labor movement divided. "It puts the government in a better position," says Philippe Frémeaux, a columnist at Economic Alternatives news magazine.

The CGT, the hard-line union at the center of French resistance to labor reform, said that 60,000 marched in Paris – compared to 100,000 who came out in the spring of 2016 to

protest labor reform under François Hollande.

Derek Doyle, an electrician and member of the largest union, CFDT, which didn't formally join the strikes Tuesday, says he came to protest anyway because he is worried about Macron's determination. "It is harder with Macron, [his administration] wants to go fast," he says.

Macron's approval rating slipped to about 40 percent over the summer, and he will be under pressure to show that he can effect change despite his fragile victory.

Although he won the most votes in the first round of elections in April, it represented only 24 percent of the electorate. Many of his second-round supporters chose him because they feared a win by National Front candidate Marine Le Pen.

Macron doesn't seem deterred. He provoked controversy ahead of the protests by saying he wouldn't cede ground to "slackers." He later stood by his words, saying he was

referring to those who continuously stand in the way of reform, but it heightened the sense that he is aloof and arrogant.

Potential for backlash

Macron is expected to push through the reform by decree later this month, while two more protests are planned. On Wednesday, French Prime Minister Édouard Philippe said on TV that he was "listening" and "paying attention" to the street. But, he added, "the reform that we are putting in place was announced by the president at the time of his election."

The government of Macron, who campaigned as a candidate neither on the "right" nor "left," says the intention is not to blaze a liberal path like Ms. Thatcher did in Britain. He campaigned to protect the vulnerable while unleashing the country's economic potential.

Yet while that drew him support from the right and left, he faces challenges keeping both happy. His political party comprises members

across the political spectrum. "His majority in the National Assembly is made up of very different people," says Mr. Frémeaux. "If there is too much dissent in the country about what he does, or promises, there may be some division within his majority."

Pichon, the protester, dismisses the "centrist" agenda on offer. "He's on the side of the bosses."

"Why is it not possible to maintain our rights when we had them after World War II when the country was in ruins?" he asks. "There are no wars, no epidemics, and the rich have never been richer. If the people don't resist, it'll never stop."

He admits this week has so far not been a "social explosion," but says he believes it will take time to foment. "It's a battle of wills," he says.



France Opens Terror Probe Into Attack by Knife-Wielding Man on Soldier in Paris Subway (online)

Noemie Bisserbe

2-3 minutes

Sept. 15, 2017 6:05 a.m. ET

PARIS—A knife-wielding man attacked a soldier in the French capital on Friday before being detained, police said, in a case prosecutors are treating as an act of terrorism.

The attack took place at around 6 a.m. local time at Châtelet, one of the city's main subway stations, said a spokeswoman for the police. No

one was injured in the attack, she added.

Paris prosecutors have opened a counterterrorism investigation, a spokesman for the prosecutor's office said on Friday.

There have been roughly a dozen attacks in France since assault by Islamic State militants that killed 130 people in Paris on Nov. 13, 2015. More than half of those have targeted military patrols or police. Three police officers have been killed.

The soldier who was attacked on Friday is among some 7,000

deployed across the country to protect railway stations, government offices, schools, places of worship and tourist attractions.

Last month, a man rammed his car into a group of soldiers in a Paris suburb injuring six. The attacker ambushed the soldiers, waiting behind the wheel of a dark-colored BMW in an alley near the soldiers' local barracks and then slamming into the group as they walked to their vehicles to begin their morning patrol.

In June, two separate attackers targeted armed patrols near the Notre Dame Cathedral and on the

Champs-Élysées, causing only minor injuries.

In April, a gunman opened fire on the Champs-Élysées, killing a police officer and wounding two other people. Police returned fire, killing the gunman, who was later identified as Karim Cheurfi, a French national. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the April attack, said SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors the extremist group's communications.

Write to Noemie Bisserbe at noemie.bisserbe@wsj.com



France revamps military force patrolling on its territory (online)

Press

1-2 minutes

By Associated Press September 14 at 4:31 PM

PARIS — The French government is making changes

to the military force that was created to protect sensitive sites after the deadly extremist attacks on France in 2015.

French Defense Minister Florence Parly said the number of troops involved in the Sentinelle operation would remain at 7,000 under the plan. But she says their assignments will be made with a

greater focus on temporary and seasonal events.

Parly says the soldiers still will patrol in and around major tourist sites, places of worship, train stations and airports. But she says they also will move more easily around the country based on local officials' requests.

Police and military forces have been targets of attacks themselves. Last month a man rammed his car into a group of soldiers near Paris, injuring six of them.

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Gobry : American Social & Economic Malaise: New Normal Is French Old Normal

5-6 minutes

Editor's Note: In a series of columns, Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry, a Paris-based conservative and fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, will write on an alarming

trend, which he calls the Francification of America.

France and America are countries linked at birth. Each has always

seen in the other a funhouse-mirror version of itself, and they have used each other to try to understand themselves. Writers such as Alexis de Tocqueville in the 19th century

and Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber in the 20th wanted France to be more like America; today, Gobry argues, America is turning into France, and in the wrong ways.

Welcome to the New Normal. Here in Paris, we know it as the Old Normal.

The phrase “the new normal” has become something of a cliché. It originated in financial circles in the wake of the 2008 crisis, with analysts who presciently suggested that the new, extraordinary interest-rate policies of the world’s major central banks would become ordinary. But it quickly grew to encompass a view of the entire economy: slow growth, mass unemployment, low productivity, stagnation. In America, these things are exceptional; the American economy sometimes stumbles, but always comes roaring back. Is this time different?

For France, this new normal is also the old normal. Alone among Western economies, the French economy never really recovered from the 1970s energy crisis, which

tipped it away from its long post-war boom, now nostalgically referred to as the Thirty Glorious Years, into mass unemployment, deficits, and low growth.

Those things are calamities not only on their own, but because of the sociopolitical realities that go along with them: an increase in various social pathologies among those hit by long-term unemployment, social stratification, and a profound, widespread sense of malaise. The upshot is that many French people have long sought someone, anyone, to Make France Great Again.

Every politico snorted at Donald Trump’s campaign slogan. After all, to say that you want to “Make America Great Again” is to admit that you think America is not *still* great, a cardinal sin. But Trump proved the pundits wrong: The slogan turned out to be a piece of genius political communication, because it captured the belief of a large swath of voters.

America, it seems, has French disease. Oh, the statistics look good on their face. After all, it is true that

America has recovered economically from the long slog of the Great Recession much better than other countries. Last quarter, GDP grew at a very impressive annualized rate of 3 percent. The unemployment rate is 4.3 percent, lower than that of every other major economy except Germany.

But as many observers have noted, and as countless American voters can attest, these rosy figures mask another, darker reality. The American labor-force-participation rate was 62.9 percent for August, the last month for which data are available. For the last five years, it has been stuck at levels not seen since the Carter administration. Many Americans have left the labor force not because they decided to stop looking for work, but because they couldn’t find any. These people now have to exist in a demimonde of informal work, welfare, and other handouts such as SSDI, without the dignity and security of work. And even on their face the unemployment numbers don’t tell such a rosy picture: The unemployment rate is 2.7 percent for those with a college degree, but

5.2 percent for those with only a high-school education, showing the bifurcation of the American workforce into the more-skilled and the less-skilled.

If Donald Trump’s victory showed something, it is that a general and widespread loss of confidence in America and its future has taken hold of voters. In the Carter Era, the same palpable “malaise” turned out to be just a blip for America, leading to a dramatic political realignment and significant economic reform and geopolitical success under Ronald Reagan. France, meanwhile, never recovered, and is stuck in the same rut today as it was 30 years ago. Now the new American normal is the old French normal. And that’s not good.

READ MORE:
The Francification of America: Part 1
The Francification of America: Part 2
The Francification of America: Part 3
— *Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry is a Paris-based writer and a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.*

CNBC : French restaurants lament China's ban on stinky, soft cheese

Sophia Yan

7-8 minutes

CNBC

An “x” is drawn through a selection of cheeses that are no longer available after bans from Chinese authorities.

BEIJING — Axel Moreaux, a French restaurant owner in Beijing, just wanted to plan a new cheese board for the menu.

“I said, ‘OK, now, I’m going to buy a lot of cheese from you,’” Moreaux said, recalling the start of big cheese negotiations with a supplier a few days ago. But the meeting ended abruptly when he learned he could no longer buy the cheeses he wanted.

Chinese authorities have banned a host of soft cheese over worries the bacteria colonies found on some varieties aren’t officially approved for import. Impacted cheeses include French brie, camembert and roquefort, Italian gorgonzola and English stilton. It’s perplexing foreign restaurateurs as they scramble to stretch remaining cheese stocks while revamping menus.

“You cannot provide a plate of French cheese if you don’t have all that stinky, famous cheese, like camembert,” said Moreaux, lamenting that he’d already printed new menus and purchased wood

plates in preparation for the cheese spread launch. He’s also getting rid of one of his bestsellers, a goat cheese salad.

Across town at Maison Flo, French chef David Thiery is gearing up for the restaurant’s giant 18th anniversary celebration in three days — without any cheese.

“Normally, we should have cheese for everyone, but the supplier just cut off the order,” he said. “No more cheese ... it’s not a joke.”

Cheeses Thiery cooks with — hard varieties, like parmesan, emmental and mozzarella — are unaffected by the ban, so many of Flo’s dishes will stay the same.

Without the ability to replenish the restaurant’s 10 or so cheese varieties on hand, he estimates Flo’s current stock of soft, stinky cheeses will be gone in a week. And that means explaining the death of the cheese trolley to customers. “They will understand, I think,” he said. “We are living in another country with [its] own rule and regulation, and we have to accept it.”

“Life continues, and I just have to adapt,” he said, making it clear he planned to consume large amounts of cheese on visits back home to France.

Others are even starting to wonder if the cheese ban is meant to encourage domestic companies to

get in big on the cheese-making business.

“If they close now the border, I think it’s that they know this will be a big market — so why import, instead of producing it?” said Clement Bacri, owner of Beijing’s Bistro 108. It could “increase [the] economy of China — from my point of view, it may be the reason.”

CNBC

Clement Bacri, the owner of Beijing’s Bistro 108, stands at a display case.

Foreign firms have long complained of China’s protectionist policies, a debate that normally centers on sectors like technology, so applying it to cheese might seem a bit unusual. Still, China’s cheese market is ballooning, forecast to hit \$800 million this year, with sales to grow on average 15 percent a year through 2022, according to Euromonitor. The smelly, softer varieties now blocked from import, though, are typically more popular with foreigners.

Whatever the reason behind the ban, Bacri, who opened shop less than a year ago, refuses to be fazed — even as he acknowledges profit growth might be a little harder to come by without certain cheeses on the menu.

“Now we need to find solution ... we are thinking about making cheese ourselves,” he said. Bacri’s already

started looking for raw milk providers in the area. While he can’t make brie or camembert, fresh cheeses like feta and cream cheese are possible, and could spice up a salad, a soufflé or even pastry puffs.

And although people often think of wine and cheese when it comes to France, “people have to know that France is not only cheese,” Bacri said. “We’re good with oysters, very good with foie gras, with duck, with beef.”

If European officials have their way, the cheese ban might end up getting reversed.

“The European Commission is in contact with the Chinese authorities on this technical issue and we hope that this matter can be resolved satisfactorily and normal trade can resume as soon as possible,” the European Union’s delegation to China in Beijing said in a statement.

After all, this isn’t China’s first cheese ban — British cheese in 2014 and Italian mozzarella in 2008 were temporarily axed over food safety concerns.

But until then, lovers of pungent, soft cheeses are facing a hard, new reality.

Moreaux, who owns five restaurants in Beijing and Shanghai, beelined for the closest grocery store after his botched cheese supplier meeting. “I ran,” he said. “And I buy the last two camembert.”

Central Banks Edge Away From Easy Money as BOE Signals Rate Rise

Jason Douglas
and Paul Hannon

7-8 minutes

Updated Sept. 14, 2017 6:14 p.m.
ET

LONDON—Three of the world's major central banks are moving in sync for the first time in years toward ending the postcrisis era of easy money, after the Bank of England signaled Thursday it is preparing to raise interest rates to restrain accelerating inflation in the U.K.

The U.S. Federal Reserve is poised to start next week the process of shrinking its \$4.2-trillion Treasury and mortgage bonds amid solid if unspectacular economic growth and the biggest monthly jump in inflation since January, and is tentatively planning to raise interest rates later this year if inflation keeps rising.

Meanwhile, the European Central Bank is likely to announce plans next month for phasing out its bond-buying program in response to a buoyant eurozone economy.

If all three deliver, it will be the first time that they have moved together to withdraw stimulus since adopting extraordinary measures to revive economies scarred by the financial crises of recent years.

Though the three central banks are moving in a similar direction, their motivations differ slightly. For the Fed and the ECB, improving growth has officials rethinking how much monetary juice their economies need even though inflation has been puzzlingly low.

In the Fed's case, a pickup in U.S. inflation last month delivered the first evidence to support officials' expectation that a slowdown in price pressures last spring would prove transitory. Until August, inflation had been muted for five straight months,

prompting growing doubts over whether the Fed would be able to raise rates one more time this year, as officials had planned after increases in March and June.

On Thursday, the U.S. Labor Department reported its consumer-price index rose 0.4% in August from a month earlier, the biggest jump since January. Excluding food and energy, so-called core prices grew 0.2%, the most since February. Futures markets responded by shifting to see a greater than 50% probability of another Fed rate increase this year, from less than that before the data release.

The BOE faces a different problem: Britain's decision to exit from the European Union last year is weighing on the economy in complex ways, including fueling an inflationary surge.

The BOE held its benchmark interest rate steady at 0.25% following its September policy meeting but the rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee said in a statement that a majority of officials on the nine-member panel believe borrowing costs will soon need to rise to bring annual inflation back to its 2% goal. Annual inflation hit 2.9% in August.

An interest-rate increase—the first in the U.K. in almost a decade—is likely “over the coming months,” the panel said, if the economy performs broadly in line with officials' expectations.

Sterling rallied 0.9% against both the dollar and the euro to \$1.33 and €1.12.

U.K. 10-year gilt yields jumped too, rising from around 1.13% before the announcement to 1.18% shortly afterward.

Those movements suggest traders and investors were surprised by the BOE's statement, and now think a

cut is a much more likely prospect in the near future. Paul Hollingsworth, an analyst at Capital Economics, said he thinks the BOE could act as soon as November.

Fed officials next week are expected to announce the October start of a plan that will allow initially small amounts of Treasury and mortgage bonds to mature without any reinvestment. Any decision on additional rate increases isn't expected until December.

In Europe, the 19-nation eurozone economy has grown more strongly than expected this year, shrugging off the uncertainty created by a series of elections in the Netherlands, France and Germany that threatened but failed to yield gains for anti-euro nationalists. The ECB's economists now believe the eurozone economy is on course for its best year since 2007, reducing the need for support from policy makers. Much as in the U.S., though, inflation has yet to show signs of a sustained rise toward the central bank's target, which is just under 2%.

The BOE's challenge is more acute. Growth in the U.K. has slowed, but inflation is accelerating, twin consequences of voters' decision last year to leave the EU.

Though it has made gains since the start of the year, the British pound remains down some 13% against the currencies of its main trading partners compared with where it was before the Brexit referendum. Sterling's slide has fueled a surge in consumer prices in Britain's import-dependent economy.

Officials had believed the inflation gains would soon fade, allowing them to hold borrowing costs low to support a slowing economy. But in recent months, they have become increasingly concerned that subdued investment and feeble productivity growth are hurting the economy's capacity to produce

goods and services without causing inflation.

BOE Gov. Mark Carney warned last month that this supply-side squeeze means interest rates may have to rise soon, and officials doubled down on that advice Thursday. They said growth in the U.K., though modest, has been slightly better than forecast, and that any remaining slack in the labor market that would normally keep a lid on inflationary pressure is diminishing more rapidly than they anticipated as recently as last month.

“In order to return inflation to that 2% target in a sustainable manner, there may need to be some adjustment of interest rates in coming months,” Mr. Carney said in a broadcast interview aired Thursday.

Minutes of officials' deliberations showed the panel voted 7-2 to hold its benchmark rate steady. The two dissenters, Ian McCafferty and Michael Saunders, pushed for an immediate rise in interest rates.

The BOE has a recent history of seeing its plans derailed by surprise developments, including last year's vote to leave the EU. In response to the pound's sharp fall in the wake of that decision, the BOE cut its key interest rate to a record low in August 2016, and restarted a paused program of bond purchases.

With the U.K.'s departure from the bloc scheduled to take place in 2019, economists doubt the BOE will raise its key interest rate sharply if it does move soon.

—Nick Timiraos contributed to this article.

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EU Pushes for Free-Trade Pacts With Countries Snubbed by U.S.

Emre Peker and
Valentina Pop

7-8 minutes

Updated Sept. 14, 2017 9:33 a.m.
ET

BRUSSELS—The European Union is defying protectionist trends and pursuing its most ambitious agenda of free-trade agreements in years.

Senior EU officials outlined Thursday free-trade agreements they seek to negotiate with Australia and New Zealand, sidestepping the thorny issue of investment protections to fast-track talks.

“The world needs leaders in trade,” European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström said. “The EU is at the forefront.”

The subtle yet significant shift to the EU's approach also includes

proposals to replace controversial tribunals for settling cross-border investment disputes with an international court and screening foreign investments in Europe.

Brussels's trade offensive—a gambit to reassert Europe's global economic prominence that faces internal and external challenges—marks a turnaround. Just last year, the bloc faced profound threats: Britain's decision to exit from the

EU, President Donald Trump's election on a protectionist economic platform, and growing support within Europe for nationalist political parties.

Today, the U.S. retrenchment on free trade is aiding EU trade efforts. Mr. Trump abandoned the 12-country Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal on his first day in office and threatened to pull the U.S. out of the North American Free Trade

Agreement with Canada and Mexico, ultimately deciding to renegotiate the pact.

"We thought we'd do nothing" on trade agreements at the start of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's five-year term in 2014, said his chief of staff, Martin Selmayr. "All this has changed, because of Trump, because of Brexit."

Longstanding U.S. allies from Mexico to Japan scrambled for stronger economic links with the EU to offset Mr. Trump's "America First" policies.

In February, Mexico and the EU agreed to accelerate talks to expand an existing trade accord. In a joint statement, they cited the "worrying rise of protectionism." Tokyo and Brussels reached a political agreement in July to slash almost all bilateral tariffs.

Australia and New Zealand, stung by the trans-Pacific trade deal's collapse, asked Brussels for trade deals before the U.K. leaves the EU in 2019. Brussels is now close to implementing tariff-free trade with Singapore and Vietnam, and the EU is trying to clinch an agreement with South America's largest trading bloc, Mercosur.

"Australia shares the EU's commitment to open markets," said Australian Trade, Tourism and Investment Minister Steven Ciobo, advocating a "comprehensive agreement." A New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry official said the EU can choose between

speed and scope of a deal, and Wellington "is prepared to work with whatever is decided."

The EU's free-trade ambitions got a boost from a ruling in May from the bloc's top court. The judges said that the EU can enact trade deals on its own, without approval from the bloc's thicket of almost 40 national and regional parliaments, if the agreements don't include clauses on portfolio investments and investment-protection mechanisms. All accords negotiated by the commission would need to be adopted by both the European Parliament and EU government leaders.

Brussels' new strategy prioritizes transparency and speed, reflecting the EU's desire to overcome pockets of European resistance to free-trade agreements, avoid yearslong negotiations and bypass ratification challenges that delay or kill its deals.

Negotiations with Australia and New Zealand are slated to pose the first test of the EU's ambition to rapidly conclude new trade agreements by omitting controversial investment pacts. The investment element of the EU's pending deal with Canada, known as CETA, almost derailed it.

"We need to make sure that we cannot only launch trade negotiations, but that we can also conclude them and have them enter into force," Ms. Malmström said.

In response to criticisms that investment-dispute arbitrations override sovereignty and allow

multinational corporations to dictate national policies, the commission is asking EU governments for a mandate to negotiate a multilateral investment court with its trade partners. The proposal would replace an existing system of ad-hoc tribunals included in more than 3,200 trade deals with a permanent body, establish an appeals process and reaffirm countries' regulatory power.

Businesses are applauding the EU's trade push.

"Europe has a role, which is even more important than before, to be a clear voice in favor of free trade, multilateralism," said Emma Marcegaglia, president of BusinessEurope, the biggest association of European trade federations.

Resistance in some quarters to the free-trade agenda remains strong. Green Party members of the European Parliament have opposed a potential EU-Japan trade deal over fear that food contaminated by the Fukushima nuclear disaster could enter Europe. EU countries including Belgium and Poland have challenged elements of CETA.

Competing interests within industry are another obstacle. The EU has tried for almost 20 years to strike a trade deal with Mercosur, which includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Last year, the EU bowed to heavy internal lobbying against opening European markets to more Latin American beef and ethanol imports, temporarily derailing talks.

Negotiations resumed this year with Mercosur and will continue next month. The EU is expected to offer new proposals to clinch a deal by year-end.

The two blocs have repeatedly failed to strike a compromise in previous negotiating rounds, but the EU's deal with Japan signals a willingness to overcome deep divides, Brazilian Foreign Minister Aloysio Nunes Ferreira said last month in Brussels.

The EU-Japan handshake required overcoming resistance from European auto makers to opening EU markets to Japanese manufacturers. In exchange, Japan agreed to lift restrictions on EU agricultural imports, a rare capitulation on its protectionist farm policies.

Diplomats acknowledge that the often-fractionious EU doesn't fully replace the U.S. role as global beacon of free trade. Still, trade officials see a chance to claim the leadership mantle.

"I don't know if the EU can compensate," said Mr. Ferreira of Brazil. "But it is important to...create this pull of economic power, political power, in favor of multilateralism."

Write to Emre Peker at emre.peker@wsj.com and **Valentina Pop** at valentina.pop@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 15, 2017, print edition as 'European Union Revs Up Push for Free-Trade Deals.'



Editorial : EU advice for nations with big visions

The Christian Science Monitor

3-4 minutes

September 14, 2017 —A good reason to watch the struggles of the European Union is that much of the world is trying to imitate its successes. How has the EU been able to link half a billion people across more than two dozen countries for so long? In a Sept. 13 speech, Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, gave the simplest answer yet: "Our values are our compass."

By values, he meant only a few: freedom, rule of law, and equality, as opposed to oppression, personal rule, and what he called second-class citizenship. The EU was set up

in postwar Europe to prevent a recurrence of such practices. Now its purpose is less defensive and more demonstrative.

"For me, Europe is more than just a single market. More than money, more than the euro. It was always about values." Mr. Juncker said in a State of the Union speech.

Over the past decade, the EU has had to keep falling back on its ideals to survive economic and political storms, such as Greece's ruinous debt, a refugee influx, and Poland's attack on its independent judiciary. The latest is Britain's planned exit by 2019. The loss of the continent's second-largest economy may actually help the EU. More than 80 percent of a shrunken EU will be using the euro as a common currency, allowing for easier integration and trust-building.

"Europe was not made to stand still. It must never do so," Juncker said.

The EU, he might have said, is a giant geopolitical experiment in creating linkages across diverse countries. At first, the EU may have bonded in trade and hard infrastructure. But it has really endured difficult times by practicing the "soft power" of unifying principles. This lesson is now more relevant than ever as a number of powerful nations are competing with visions to connect the Eurasian landmass.

The most ambitious plan is China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative, which aims to build a "silk road" for the 21st century, both on land and sea. Russia has launched its own infrastructure vision through the Eurasian Economic Union. Turkey has its Vision 2023 plan to link its

economy with railroads across Central Asia. Japan is using its technological expertise to create land and maritime corridors across Asia. Iran, South Korea, and the 10 nations of Southeast Asia have similar visions of being the centers of interconnecting transport and other economic activity.

What may be missing in these transborder plans are the binding values that go beyond material interests and institutional power. The EU has learned by hard experience that its "soft" ideals provide the links that endure the occasional frictions between nations. That is why a speech by a well-seasoned EU leader like Juncker comes with lessons for much of the world.

INTERNATIONAL

THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL

Kwanwoo Jun in Seoul

6-7 minutes

North Korea Fires Missile in Defiance of U.N. Sanctions (UNE)

Alastair Gale in Tokyo and Kwanwoo Jun in Seoul

Updated Sept. 14, 2017 10:34 p.m. ET

North Korea fired a missile over Japan early Friday local time for the second time in a month, defying rising international efforts to force it to abandon course.

In a rare move, South Korea responded to the launch by immediately conducting a simulated strike of the North Korean launch site, an air base near Pyongyang. In Japan, alerts were sent to smartphones of people living in areas where the missile was projected to pass over soon after the launch was detected. No damage or injuries were reported.

The latest missile launch marked Pyongyang's latest provocation after the United Nations Security Council on Monday unanimously adopted new sanctions against North Korea.

The Security Council will hold an emergency meeting on Friday at the request of the U.S. and Japan. A new violation by the North, in response to the adoption of the fresh sanctions, was anticipated, some diplomats said, raising the stakes for finding a diplomatic solution.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for the new sanctions to be fully enforced.

"We need to make North Korea understand that there is no bright future for them if they pursue this course further," he said.

The latest missile passed over the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido and landed in the Pacific Ocean shortly after 7 a.m. Japan time, a similar path to another missile launched on Aug. 29. It traveled around 2,300 miles, according to South Korea's joint chiefs of staff, further than the roughly 1,700 miles traveled by the previous missile, highlighting the country's progress in developing nuclear weapons that can threaten the U.S.

North Korea has twice tested intercontinental-range missiles this year. The latest launch was of a shorter-range projectile that wouldn't be able to reach the U.S. mainland. The country frequently threatens U.S. bases in the Asia-Pacific region, including a specific threat to Guam last month. Guam is about 2,100 miles south-southeast of Pyongyang.

Melissa Hanham, a senior research associate at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in California, said that based on initial data, the missile was likely a Hwasong-12 type device, which was also used in the Aug. 29 launch.

"They are working towards demonstrating they can hit Guam," she said.

The U.S. Pacific Command confirmed the latest launch was of an intermediate-range ballistic missile that it said posed no threat to the U.S. mainland or Guam.

In Washington, President Donald Trump was briefed on the launch by John Kelly, his chief of staff, said White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and U.K. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said they hoped that China would eventually back an oil embargo to get North Korea to come to the negotiating table.

Mr. Tillerson said that after the U.S. and other powers last week watered down a U.N. Security Council resolution on North Korea, including shifting from a ban on oil shipments to a cap to bring China on board, he hoped that China would decide "to take it up upon themselves to use that very powerful tool of oil supply to persuade North Korea to reconsider" its development of weapons and its approach to dialogue and negotiations in the future.

In a statement following the missile launch, Mr. Tillerson also called on Russia to crack down on the use of forced North Korean labor, which provides millions of dollars annually to the regime in Pyongyang.

On his way back to the U.S. from meetings in London, Mr. Tillerson spoke by phone with his counterparts in Seoul and Tokyo. An aide said they noted that the latest test represents the second time recently that Japan, a treaty ally of the U.S., has been directly threatened by North Korea.

The North Korean missile was the sixth to pass over Japanese territory since 1998. Japan's Defense Ministry recently requested around \$1.6 billion for new missile-defense technology in its budget for the fiscal year starting next April.

South Korea has recently been bolstering its own defense capabilities in response to North Korea's advancing nuclear and

missile tests. Seoul earlier this week held its first live-fire test of cruise missiles designed to destroy the North Korean leadership's underground bunkers.

South Korea has also rushed the deployment of an advanced U.S. missile defense system, called Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, in the country's southeast, speeding up an environmental assessment that had temporarily stalled the process.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in himself presided over a National Security Council meeting Friday to discuss North Korea's continued provocations, according to the presidential office in Seoul.

At the meeting, according to his office, Mr. Moon urged that additional preparations be undertaken to counter potential electromagnetic pulse, biochemical and other attacks from North Korea.

In its simulated strike of the North Korean launch site on Friday, the South Korean missile flew about 155 miles off the country's east coast, with the flight distance adjusted to match that needed to hit the launch site, according to the Defense Ministry in Seoul.

—Gordon Lubold and Michael C. Bender in Washington, Farnaz Fassihi at the United Nations and Felicia Schwartz in London contributed to this article.

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Appeared in the September 15, 2017, print edition as 'North Korea Fires New Missile In Defiance of U.N. Sanctions.'

The
New York
Times

Sanger

9-11 minutes

North Korea Launches Another Missile, Escalating Crisis

Choe Sang-Hun and David E.

challenge to the United States and China just days after a new sanctions resolution adopted by the United Nations Security Council that was intended to force the country to halt its accelerating nuclear and missile tests.

The missile was not aimed at the Pacific island of Guam, which President Trump had warned could prompt a military response after North Korea threatened to fire missiles into the sea near the island last month.

Instead, it blasted off from near the Sunan International Airport north of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, and flew about 2,300 miles directly east, flying over northern Japan and falling into the Pacific Ocean, according to the South Korean military. That is a slightly greater distance than between the North Korean capital and the American air base in Guam, and American officials, scrambling to assess both the symbolism and importance of the test, said it was clearly intended to make the point

that the North could reach the base with ease.

One senior American military official called it a test shot that was also meant as a warning that the primary American bomber base in the Pacific, which would be central to any military action on the Korean Peninsula, was within easy reach of the North's intermediate-range missiles.

At the White House, the launching came at the end of the working day, and senior officials gathered in the

News about North Korea's missile launch broadcast in Tokyo on Friday. Kimimasa Mayama/European Pressphoto Agency

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea fired another ballistic missile over Japan on Friday, a direct

Situation Room to weigh a response. But the Trump administration chose not to take out the missile on the launching pad, even though they saw it being fueled up a day ago. Vice President Mike Pence, officials said, was even shown images of the missile during a visit to one of the nation's intelligence agencies.

Neither the United States nor Japan tried to shoot down the missile, perhaps because it was clear moments after the launching that it was not aimed at land. "The North American Aerospace Defense Command determined this ballistic missile did not pose a threat to North America," Cmdr. Dave Benham, a spokesman for United States Pacific Command, said in a statement. It also concluded that the missile "did not pose a threat to Guam."

Nonetheless, in Japan, an alert was issued on television and via cellphones, warning people to take shelter inside a building or underground. Japan said the missile landed in waters about 1,370 miles east of the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido.

The launching appeared to answer a lingering question: whether Kim Jong-un, North Korea's leader, would view the latest round of sanctions, passed unanimously by the Security Council, as a threat to his government or a reason to speed forward with his program. The test also appeared to move the North one step closer to showing that it could place a nuclear warhead atop a missile that could travel thousands of miles, a prospect that has rattled the region and posed a daunting foreign policy challenge to the Trump administration.

Can the U.S. Stop a North Korean Missile?

The United States uses two different categories of missile defense to counter North Korea.



North Korea Fired a Missile From Pyongyang

Kim Tong-Hyung and Foster Klug / AP

5-6 minutes

(SEOUL, South Korea) — North Korea conducted its longest-ever test flight of a ballistic missile Friday, sending an intermediate-range weapon hurtling over U.S. ally Japan into the northern Pacific Ocean in a launch that signals both defiance to its rivals and a big technological advance.

Here's how they work and — sometimes — how they don't.

By ROBIN STEIN and DREW JORDAN on August 27, 2017. Watch in Times Video »

Intelligence officials have said in recent days that they believe that if Mr. Kim is willing to enter talks over a freeze of his nuclear and missile testing — and they are uncertain that he is — he will only do so after he has established that he can launch a nuclear weapon capable of hitting American territory. The Friday flight, with a long arc that peaked at an altitude a little less than 500 miles, took him close to demonstrating that he can accomplish just that.

For the White House, the launching prompts a series of diplomatic and military challenges.

Mr. Trump is scheduled to meet with South Korea's president, Moon Jae-in, and Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, in New York next week. But Mr. Trump was clearly frustrated by the failure of the Security Council to enact tougher sanctions, including a complete cutoff of oil and other fuels imported into the North, mostly from China. It also did not win authorization to use military force, if needed, to inspect North Korean ships in international waters for arms and other items prohibited by the United Nations.

Mr. Trump's aides say that they have not ruled out using preemptive strikes to stop North Korea's tests. But they also acknowledge that such strikes could result in retaliation and escalation, putting tens of millions of South Koreans, Americans and Japanese at risk.

Mr. Abe, after returning to Tokyo from a visit to India, said, "We need to let North Korea realize that if they keep taking this path, they will have no bright future."

Earlier, Yoshihide Suga, chief cabinet secretary to Mr. Abe, said

that Japan "absolutely cannot accept the repeated outrageous provocative actions by North Korea" and lodged an official protest with the North, "conveying the strong fury of the Japanese people as well as condemning the action with the strongest words." Those were, of course, exactly the words Mr. Kim has made clear he wants to hear from Japan.

In a statement, Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson used a line that many of his predecessors have used, to no effect, in the past: "These continued provocations only deepen North Korea's diplomatic and economic isolation."

But Mr. Tillerson turned the issue back to China and Russia. "China supplies North Korea with most of its oil. Russia is the largest employer of North Korean forced labor," he said. "China and Russia must indicate their intolerance for these reckless missile launches by taking direct actions of their own."

The Security Council will hold "urgent consultations" on Friday at the request of the United States and Japan, the office of Ethiopia's ambassador said Thursday. Ethiopia holds the Council's rotating presidency for September.

South Korean officials said they were still analyzing the flight data to determine what type of missile was launched. In any event, it flew farther than any other missile North Korea has fired.

As the missile blasted off at 6:57 a.m. on Friday, South Korea almost simultaneously launched its Hyunmoo-2 ballistic missile off its east coast in a simulated preemptive strike, South Korean defense officials said.

Mr. Moon approved the South Korean launching and ordered his national security council to meet to discuss the North's missile test. A proponent of dialogue with North Korea, he has joined Washington in

campaigning for tougher sanctions and pressure against the North after its nuclear test.

It was the 15th missile test by North Korea this year and the first since North Korea detonated its most powerful nuclear bomb to date on Sept. 3.

In retaliation against the nuclear test, the United Nations Security Council adopted the new sanctions resolution against North Korea on Tuesday, its ninth since the country's first nuclear test in 2006. If enforced, it would deprive North Korea of 30 percent of its annual fuel imports. It also bans textile imports from North Korea, stripping the country of another key source of hard currency.

But North Korea, already heavily sanctioned, has remained defiant, vowing to "redouble the efforts to increase its strength to safeguard the country's sovereignty and right to existence" and to establish "the practical equilibrium with the U.S."

On the eve of the latest missile test, a North Korean government organization said that the United States should be "beaten to death" like a "rabid dog" for spearheading new United Nations sanctions and that its ally Japan should be "sunken into the sea."

"Now is the time to annihilate the U.S. imperialist aggressors," a spokesman for the North's Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee said Thursday, according to the Korean Central News Agency. "Let's reduce the U.S. mainland into ashes and darkness."

The spokesman accused Japan of "dancing to the tune of the U.S." and warned of a "telling blow" against Japan. "The four islands of the archipelago should be sunken into the sea by the nuclear bomb of *juche*," he said, referring to the North's ruling philosophy of *juche*, or self-reliance.

Since President Donald Trump threatened the North with "fire and fury" in August, Pyongyang has conducted its most powerful nuclear test, threatened to send missiles into the waters around the U.S. Pacific island territory of Guam and launched two missiles of increasing range over Japan. July saw its first tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles that could strike deep into the U.S. mainland when perfected.

The growing frequency, power and confidence displayed by these tests seem to confirm what governments and outside experts have long

feared: North Korea is closer than ever to its goal of building a military arsenal that can viably target both U.S. troops in Asia and the U.S. homeland. This, in turn, is meant to allow North Korea greater military freedom in the region by raising doubts in Seoul and Tokyo that Washington would risk the annihilation of a U.S. city to protect its Asian allies.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the latest missile traveled about 3,700 kilometers (2,300 miles) and reached a maximum height of 770 kilometers (478

miles). Guam, which is the home of important U.S. military assets, is 3,400 kilometers (2,112 miles) away from North Korea.

North Korea has repeatedly vowed to continue these tests amid what it calls U.S. hostility — by which it means the presence of nearly 80,000 U.S. troops stationed in Japan and South Korea. Robust international diplomacy on the issue has been stalled for years, and there's little sign that senior officials from Pyongyang and Washington might sit down to discuss ways to slow the North's determined march

toward inclusion among the world's nuclear weapons powers.

Friday's test, which Seoul said was the 19th launch of a ballistic missile by North Korea this year, triggered sirens and warning messages in northern Japan but caused no apparent damage to aircraft or ships. It was the second missile fired over Japan in less than a month. North Korea conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on Sept. 3.

The missile was launched from Sunan, the location of Pyongyang's international airport and the origin of the earlier missile that flew over Japan. Analysts have speculated the new test was of the same intermediate-range missile launched in that earlier flight, the Hwasong-12, and was meant to show Washington that the North can hit Guam if it chose to do so.

It was met with the usual outrage. South Korean President Moon Jae-

in ordered his military to conduct a live-fire ballistic missile drill in response and instructed government officials to pursue "stern" measures to discourage further provocations. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said one of the two missiles fired in the drill hit a sea target about 250 kilometers (155 miles) away, which was approximately the distance to Pyongyang's Sunan, but the other failed in flight shortly after launch.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis both called the North Korean launch a reckless act. The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency closed-door meeting to be held Friday afternoon in New York. Trump has not commented.

South Korean experts have said North Korea wants to make missiles flying over Japan an accepted norm as it seeks to win more military space in a region dominated by its enemies.

the Atlantic North Korea Keeps Up Its Provocations

Krishnadev Calamur

6-8 minutes

North Korea on Thursday for the second time in recent weeks flew a ballistic missile over Japan. The launch came days after the United Nations Security Council passed its harshest round of sanctions yet on the country, and is the first missile test the North has conducted since its sixth nuclear test on September 3. (By coincidence, the launch occurred around the same time that Air Force General John Hyten, the commander in charge of America's nuclear forces, told reporters he "had to assume" that test was of a hydrogen bomb, as North Korea claimed.) The September nuclear test was North Korea's most powerful to date; the missile tested Thursday, *The Diplomat's* Ankit Panda pointed out, flew further than any other the North has tested so far. With each incremental advance, the North gets closer to its stated goal of being able to target the United States with a nuclear weapon—and may have already reached it.

Pyongyang is estimated to have about 60 nuclear weapons. But for it to be able to use their destructive power—or gain the deterrence it says it wants—it needs the ability to miniaturize a warhead that can be fitted onto an ICBM. The Japanese government estimated last month that the North had succeeded in miniaturizing a nuclear warhead—a significant development that would

allow it to put the entire United States in its nuclear crosshairs.

As I reported recently, in 2016, North Korea tested 26 missiles; 16 of those tests were successful and 10 failed, according to a database maintained by the Nuclear Threat Initiative. So far this year, there have been 19 tests—counting Thursday's: 13 successes, five failures, and one unknown. Not only is North Korea showing its increasing ability to successfully test missiles—62 percent success rate in 2016 vs 68 percent so far this year, including Thursday's—but it is also well on its way to exceeding the number of tests it carried out last year. This suggests that the North isn't really worried about its supply of missiles; in other words, it's now making its own.

And despite the frequency of tests, overflying Japan is an escalation. As my colleagues Yasmeen Serhan and Kathy Gilsinan noted when a North Korean missile overflew Japan in late August—the first time such an event had occurred in eight years—the North's technical ability to do so had been known before. But the message then, as now, may have been more political than technical. They wrote:

James Acton, the co-director of the nuclear policy program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [said]: "I think you have to look at this test more than anything else as a signal to the United States." ... Having warned North Korea in unusually bellicose terms not to threaten America earlier this month, President Donald

Trump initially flight-tested the Hwasong-12 and the ICBM model Hwasong-14 at highly lofted angles to reduce their range and avoid neighboring countries.

The two launches over Japan indicate North Korea is moving toward using angles close to operational to determine whether its warheads can survive the harsh conditions of atmospheric re-entry and detonate properly.

North Korea's August launch over Japan came weeks after it threatened to fire a salvo of Hwasong-12s toward Guam and bracket the island with "enveloping" missile fire.

North Korea has been accelerating its nuclear weapons development under leader Kim Jong Un, a third-generation dictator who has conducted four of North Korea's six nuclear tests since taking power in 2011. The weapons being tested include hard-to-detect solid-fuel

missiles designed to be launched from road mobile launchers or submarines.

North Korea claimed its latest nuclear test was a detonation of a thermonuclear weapon built for its ICBMs.

The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved new sanctions earlier this week over the nuclear test. They ban all textile exports and prohibit any country from authorizing new work permits for North Korean workers — two key sources of hard currency. They also prohibit North Korea from importing all natural gas liquids and condensates, and cap Pyongyang's imports of crude oil and refined petroleum products.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry denounced the U.N. sanctions and said the North will "redouble its efforts to increase its strength to safeguard the country's sovereignty and right to existence."

Trump at a recent rally noted that he thought Kim Jong Un was beginning to respect the United States, given what seemed to be a pause in North Korea's missile testing. That apparent pause ended last Friday as the United States and South Korea engaged in annual joint military exercises that the North has long viewed as a provocation. (North Korea has tested missiles during such exercises in the past.)

Still, the missile tested Thursday, like the one tested in late August, followed a flight path over northern Japan, and away from the American territory of Guam, which North Korea's Kim Jong Un had threatened earlier in the summer. The provocation now as then may be calibrated to avoid direct confrontation with the United States, though the U.S. has maintained it hasn't ruled out any option for dealing with North Korea.

North Korea's nuclear and missile technology is by no means state of the art. For decades, it relied on technology and parts from the Soviet Union, Russia, China, Iran, and Pakistan. So the technology is tried and tested, and the North, in the face of international sanctions, now seems to be able to make the parts needed for its ambitious military programs. (Nor is North Korea's economy as hamstrung as many in the West believe, according to Mitsuhiro Mimura, a Japanese economist, who has visited the North 45 times since 1996. In an interview with *38 North*, the North Korea-focused website, Mimura called the North the "poorest

advanced economy in the world—but what's important to understand is that, while it may be poor, it is still an advanced economy.")

International sanctions on the North, while ambitious in scope, are relatively recent—and it's not clear they are particularly effective. North Korea has a proven track record of sanctions evasion. There's a history of the sanctions, including those imposed by the United Nations, being subverted. So far the U.S. goal of imposing an oil embargo remains unrealized; the U.S. had to drop it from the most recent sanctions package to get Russia and China's approval in the Security Council vote.

Though Beijing too is growing increasingly annoyed with Pyongyang and has twice voted for stronger sanctions in the Security Council in recent weeks, it ultimately wants dialogue to resolve the tensions. Beijing's freeze-for-freeze proposal, in which the U.S. and South Korea would suspend military exercises in exchange for a North Korean moratorium on testing, has been labeled as "insulting" by Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the UN. Russia, which is another of the five veto-wielding UN Security Council members—France, the U.K., and the U.S. are the others—also favors dialogue. Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed the efficacy of sanctions, saying North Korea would "rather eat grass than abandon their [nuclear weapons] program unless they feel secure," though Russia nevertheless voted

in favor of the latest round of sanctions.

Which leaves the U.S. in the position of trying to cobble together

a diplomatic solution to the crisis, with partners who might view the situation in the same way it does, but offer an entirely different prescription. Haley has been

advocating a tough response to the North at the UN. In Washington, when Rex Tillerson, the U.S. secretary of state, was asked recently if he had “any response to

North Korea’s nuclear test,” he replied: “Oh, we’ll have one.” After Thursday’s missile test, the world is still waiting.



North Korea fires another missile over Japan, triggering warnings and condemnation

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

10-12 minutes

SEOUL — North Korea fired another missile over the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido on Friday morning, just a day after Pyongyang said that Japan “should be sunken into the sea” with a nuclear bomb and that the United States should be “beaten to death” with a stick “fit for a rabid dog.”

This was the second time in less than three weeks that North Korea sent a ballistic missile over Japan, and the launch came less than two weeks after North Korea exploded what is widely believed to be a hydrogen bomb.

The latest launch immediately sparked angry reactions from Tokyo and Seoul. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the international community had to unite to punish Kim Jong Un’s regime, calling this week’s U.N. Security Council sanctions “the floor, not the ceiling.”

“China supplies North Korea with most of its oil. Russia is the largest employer of North Korean forced labor,” Tillerson said in a statement, singling out the two veto-wielding members of the Security Council, who are also the closest thing to allies that North Korea has.

“China and Russia must indicate their intolerance for these reckless missile launches by taking direct actions of their own,” he said.

Kim Jong Un has tested nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles at an unprecedented rate since he came into power. Yet, the country is under some of the toughest sanctions ever. This is how the regime is able to funnel billions of dollars into its nuclear program. Economy of deceit: How North Korea funds its nuclear weapons program—Part 1 | Loopholes (Video: Jason Aldag/Photo: Linda Davidson/The Washington Post)

Kim Jong Un has tested nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles at an unprecedented rate since he came into power. Yet, the country is under some of the toughest sanctions ever. This is how the regime is able to funnel billions of dollars into its

nuclear program. (Jason Aldag/The Washington Post)

The missile was launched from the Sunan airfield just north of Pyongyang about 6:30 a.m. local time, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said. It flew 2,300 miles over 17 minutes, passing over Hokkaido and landing some 1,200 miles to the east in the Pacific Ocean.

The launch immediately triggered emergency alerts in Japan, with text messages and loud speakers telling residents beneath the missile’s potential flight path to seek shelter.

The Japanese government warned people not to approach any debris or other suspicious-looking material, a reflection of the fact that North Korean missiles sometimes break up in flight.

Echoing Tillerson, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said that the international community must “firmly unite to send out a clear message” to Pyongyang. “We need to have North Korea understand that they will have no bright future if they keep going this way,” he said.

But Japan did not try to shoot down the missile. South Korea, however, immediately fired two of its -Hyunmoo-II missiles 155 miles into the sea — the same distance they would have had to travel to reach the Sunan airfield.

In Seoul, South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who has been staunchly in favor of engagement with North Korea, said that dialogue was “impossible in a situation like this.”

In Washington, the White House said President Trump was briefed on the latest North Korean missile launch by his chief of staff, John F. Kelly.

The missile did not pose a threat to North America or to the U.S. territory of Guam, the U.S. Pacific Command said. The Pacific island of Guam is home to large Air Force and Navy bases and was the target of recent rhetorical threats from North Korea.

“We continue to monitor North Korea’s actions closely,” the Pacific Command said in a statement.

In Beijing, Hua Chunying, a spokeswoman for the Chinese

foreign ministry, told reporters Friday that China opposed the test, but called the situation on the Korean Peninsula “complicated, sensitive and severe” and urged all sides to exercise restraint.

The Global Times, a Chinese Communist Party-controlled tabloid known for its nationalist tone, said in a Friday editorial that, although North Korea is the troublemaker, it is the United States and South Korea that can change the status quo.

“North Korea’s current nuclear and missile activities seem unstoppable, the channel for resolving the problem via negotiation is still missing,” the editorial read.

David Wright, co-director of the global security program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, said the latest missile launch was worrying.

“The range of this test was significant since North Korea demonstrated that it could reach Guam with this missile,” he said, although he noted it is not known whether the missile was carrying a payload, something that influences range. Guam lies 2,100 miles from North Korea, well within technical reach of the intermediate-range missile.

[North Korean missile flies over Japan, escalating tensions]

Friday’s launch appeared similar to the previous launch, on Aug. 29. On that day, North Korea fired a Hwasong-12 — an intermediate-range ballistic missile technically capable of flying 3,000 miles, enough to reach Guam — from the Sunan airfield. But it also flew to the east, over Hokkaido and into the Pacific Ocean, rather than southward toward Guam.

Analysts said that after testing its missiles by firing them straight up and having them crash into the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, North Korea was apparently testing its missiles’ flight on a normal trajectory without crossing a “red line” of aiming at the United States.

On Thursday, a North Korean state agency had issued an alarming threat to what it offensively called the “wicked Japs.”

“The four islands of the [Japanese] archipelago should be sunken into the sea by [our] nuclear bomb,” a spokesman for the Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee said in a statement carried by the official news agency. Hokkaido is the northernmost of Japan’s four main islands.

“Japan is no longer needed to exist near us,” the committee spokesman said.

This is the first missile launch since North Korea conducted a huge nuclear test Sept. 3, which analysts say appeared to live up to Pyongyang’s claim that the device involved was a hydrogen bomb, exponentially more powerful than a normal atomic device.

That test, combined with the rapid pace of missile launches and North Korea’s stated goal of wanting to be able to strike the mainland United States with a nuclear-tipped missile, has caused alarm around the world.

The U.N. Security Council imposed its toughest sanctions ever against North Korea on Monday, setting limits on its oil imports and banning its textile exports. But the new sanctions were a compromise. To win the support of China and Russia, the United States had to tone down its demands, which included a total oil embargo and a global travel ban on Kim.

Tillerson’s statement reflected the Trump administration’s frustration with the reluctance of Beijing and Moscow to inflict real pain on Pyongyang.

The North Korean statement that hit out at Japan on Thursday also displayed Pyongyang’s anger at what it called the “heinous sanctions resolution.”

The North Korean people and military wanted “the Yankees, chief culprit in cooking up the ‘sanctions resolution,’ [to] be beaten to death as a stick is fit for a rabid dog,” said the committee statement delivered through the spokesman.

The Sept. 3 nuclear test, North Korea’s sixth, is now widely assumed to have been a test of a hydrogen bomb, as Pyongyang claimed in its state propaganda.

The Japanese government estimates that the force of that explosion was 160 kilotons — more than 10 times the size of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 — but some analysts have said its yield could have been as much as 250 kilotons.

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, traveling from Washington to view U.S. nuclear weapons at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., said Wednesday that the North Korean nuclear test appeared to be “100 kilotons or more.”

“It’s a large one,” he said.

Earlier, Air Force Gen. John Hyten, the chief of U.S. Strategic Command, said that he “had to assume” that North Korea had probably tested a hydrogen bomb,

judging by the size of the explosion.

Speaking just before the North’s latest missile launch, Hyten, who oversees U.S. nuclear forces and monitors North Korea, told reporters that the size, yield and other indications in North Korea’s most recent nuclear test “equates to a hydrogen bomb.”

[*What is North Korea trying to hit?*]

He said he could not confirm that a hydrogen bomb was tested but said the test was significant “because of the sheer destruction and damage you can use and create with a weapon of that size.”

“The change from the original atomic bomb to the hydrogen [bomb] changed our entire deterrent relationship with the Soviet Union,”



North Korea’s latest nuclear test was so powerful it reshaped the mountain above it

<https://www.facebook.com/myhlee>
6-7 minutes

North Korea announced its sixth nuclear test yet on Sunday, Sept. 3. State media says leader Kim Jong Un ordered the test of a hydrogen bomb that can be mounted on an intercontinental ballistic missile. North Korea announced its sixth nuclear test yet on Sunday, Sept. 3. State media says leader Kim Jong Un ordered the test of a hydrogen bomb that can be mounted on an intercontinental ballistic missile. (Reuters)

North Korea announced its sixth nuclear test yet on Sunday, Sept. 3. State media says leader Kim Jong Un ordered the test of a hydrogen bomb that can be mounted on an intercontinental ballistic missile. (Reuters)

SEOUL — New radar satellite images show the Sept. 3 nuclear test by North Korea was powerful enough to sink a roughly 85-acre area on the peak of a mountain above the tunnels where the test likely took place.

North Korea carries out its nuclear tests in a complex of tunnels at its Punggye-ri site, and images of the mountains, in this case Mount Mantap, above it can give experts a sense of where the device was tested exactly and how powerful it was.

[*North Korea nuclear test may have been twice as strong as first*

thought]
The new Synthetic Aperture Radar satellite images, captured before and after Sept. 3, showed “significant changes at Mount Mantap’s peak elevation,” wrote Jeffrey Lewis, head of the East Asia program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in California. “Before the test, Mount Mantap was 2,205 meters high; the mountain has since diminished in height,” he added.

“You can see that the explosion visibly displaces the mountain, which demonstrates both how large the explosion was but also that it occurred in the same tunnel complex as the preceding four nuclear tests,” Lewis wrote on the Arms Control Wonk website. “This is useful because the relationship between the size of the explosion and the magnitude of the seismic signals is sensitive to the overburden — how much rock is above the explosion.”

The images were taken by Airbus, a space technology company that makes earth observation satellites, using its TerraSAR-X satellite, and were provided to experts at the center. You can see the change in this animated image that Lewis posted on Twitter:

The device, which North Korea described as a hydrogen bomb capable of being placed on a ballistic missile, was the most powerful it has tested to date. Original estimates had put its yield in the 100-kiloton range, but updated seismic data analyzed by

Hyten said. “It is significantly of concern not just to Strategic Command but to everybody in the free world. It should be of concern to people in the neighborhood, which is Japan and Korea, as well as China and Russia.”

Hyten said that if North Korea can mount a bomb of that power on a missile, it could potentially destroy a city. The United States has the ability to deter a nuclear attack on itself or its allies because of the nuclear weapons it maintains, Hyten said, but it’s a “different question” whether the United States can stop North Korea from building nuclear weapons.

Hyten said that the United States still has not seen North Korea “put everything together” with a nuclear warhead mounted on an

intercontinental ballistic missile but that it is only a matter of time before the North Koreans do so.

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“Whether they have the ability, I don’t have any insight into that,” Hyten said. “I can just look at historic examples and say that it could be within months or it could be within years.”

Lamothe reported from Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. David Nakamura in Washington, and Luna Lin and Shirley Feng in Beijing contributed to this report.

experts this week put it closer to a whopping 250 kilotons, or nearly 17 times more powerful than the bomb that flattened Hiroshima.

The new images are “additional proof that the September 2017 explosion was much larger than ever before at this site,” said Melissa Hanham, senior research associate at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies. In comparison, radar images of last year’s nuclear test did not show a noticeable change in the surface area of the same mountain, she said.

[*What is North Korea trying to hit?*

The sunken area corresponds with some of the highest peaks of Mount Mantap, Hanham said.

“It makes sense that they would use their existing tunnel network attached to the North Portal entrance, because this leads to where the overburden is the greatest,” Hanham said. “If they used a tunnel with less overburden, they might have blown the top off the mountain.”

The growing threat from the north has led to more South Koreans calling for their own nuclear weapons. A Gallup Korea poll conducted after the Sept. 3 test found that 60 percent of respondents supported nuclear weapons for the south.

But in an interview with CNN on Thursday, South Korean President Moon Jae-in ruled out the idea: “To respond to North Korea by having our own nuclear weapons will not

maintain peace on the Korean Peninsula and could lead to a nuclear arms race in Northeast Asia.”

In response to the Sept. 3 nuclear test, the United Nations on Monday unanimously agreed on its toughest sanctions against North Korea to date, setting limits on its oil imports and banning its textile exports. North Korea condemned the sanctions and warned that the United States would “suffer the greatest pain” it has ever experienced for leading the effort to ratchet up economic pressures on the reclusive nation.

After the latest round of U.N. sanctions, North Korea vowed to “sink” Japan with nuclear weapons and “reduce the United States to ashes.” After the latest round of U.N. sanctions, North Korea vowed to “sink” Japan with nuclear weapons and “reduce the United States to ashes.” (Reuters)

After the latest round of U.N. sanctions, North Korea vowed to “sink” Japan with nuclear weapons and “reduce the United States to ashes.” (Reuters)

On Thursday, North Korea issued another threat, this time targeting both Japan and the United States. In a statement issued by North Korea’s official news agency, Pyongyang said it would use nuclear weapons to “sink” Japan and “reduce the U.S. mainland to ashes and darkness.”



Volodzko: North Korea's Secret Weapon? Economic Growth.

by David Volodzko More stories by David Volodzko

6-7 minutes

Economy

Rising living standards will limit the effect of sanctions.

September 14, 2017, 5:00 PM EDT

Things are looking up. Sort of.

Photographer: Ed Jones/AFP

With the United Nations imposing yet another round of sanctions on North Korea for its nuclear provocations, it's worth asking why such penalties have been failing for more than a decade. One reason is that the North Korean economy is improving more than is commonly understood -- and that will make altering its behavior through trade barriers significantly harder.

The current approach to sanctions is partly based on the assumption that North Korea's economy is a socialist nightmare, but that's no longer really true. Although the country is still poor, its gross domestic product grew by an estimated 3.9 percent in 2016, to about \$28.5 billion, the fastest pace in 17 years. Wages have risen quickly, and per-capita GDP is now on par with Rwanda, an African

economic exemplar.

This progress is partly due to continued trade with China, which remains reluctant to crack down on its neighbor, despite calls for tighter sanctions. Although China agreed in February to ban North Korean coal imports, iron imports have surged and total trade increased by 10.5 percent in the first half of the year, to \$2.55 billion.

At the same time, economic reforms made in 2011 have begun to take hold, allowing factory managers to set salaries, find their own suppliers, and hire and fire employees. Farming collectives have been replaced by a family-based management system, which has led to far greater harvests. The government has even come to tolerate private enterprise on a limited basis.

The results are striking. Street vendors, once rare, are now a common site in Pyongyang. Some neighborhoods have new luxury high-rises, modern supermarkets, fashionable shops, and streets busy with Mercedes-Benzes and BMWs. Although the government denies having abandoned the old socialist system, the evidence is undeniable: By some estimates, the private sector now accounts for up to half of GDP.

Meanwhile, given the country's still-widespread impoverishment, simple

improvements in agriculture and natural-disaster management are enough to yield significant new growth. Last year's impressive GDP gains were due largely to recovery from a bad drought in 2015.

For North Koreans, rising living standards are obviously a good thing. The problem is that the economy still has plenty of room to grow before further progress will require the removal of trade barriers. That means it could be years before new sanctions would hurt enough to cause a significant change in behavior. Until then, the nation's ideology of self-reliance, known as *juche*, seems almost plausible.

Kim Jong-un, North Korea's dictator, looks to be fashioning himself after South Korea's Park Chung-hee or China's Deng Xiaoping -- that is, as an iron-fisted economic reformist. Despite rampant human-rights violations, Park still stands tall in the memory of many South Koreans for bringing the country into economic maturity. Deng is largely responsible for turning China into the economic powerhouse that it is today. It's easy to imagine that if Kim's nuclear arsenal keeps the U.S. military at bay long enough, he's got a shot at a similar legacy.

Of course, he still faces some enormous challenges, not least

being cut off from the global system of trade. Hidebound apparatchiks may object to further reforms, a wealthier public may question the legitimacy of Communist rule in an increasingly capitalist state, and market bubbles could prove destabilizing. But faced with excruciating pressure and scant resources, North Korea has nevertheless been steadily achieving its goals for years. Further economic growth is likely to only help.

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David Volodzko is the national editor for Korea JoongAng Daily and a columnist for the South China Morning Post.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Grove

5-7 minutes

Updated Sept. 14, 2017 3:18 p.m. ET

Russia kicked off one of its largest military exercises since the Cold War Thursday, moving tanks to its border with Belarus and landing hundreds of paratroopers under the watch of a NATO surveillance plane.

The exercise, set to last until Sept. 20, has boosted tensions between Russia and the West, which is increasingly mindful of Moscow's growing military power. Russia's multibillion-dollar modernization of its armed forces has been increasingly evident in Syria and Ukraine.

Maneuvers from the training exercise, known as Zapad, or West, were shown on state television in Russia, where President Vladimir Putin has staked his high popularity on boosting Russia's stature against the West.

Russia Kicks Off War Games as West Watches

Julian E. Barnes and Thomas

Russia says the exercise is meant to prepare armed forces in its western military district to deal with terrorist threats. Western military analysts say the operation is really focused on how Russia can respond to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in case of a conflict. The alliance and U.S. officials have warned of the possibility of an accident or miscalculation by Russian forces.

"They say they are training against terrorist formations, but it's clear it's an exercise defined with NATO in mind," said Sven Sakkov, director of the International Centre for Defence and Security, based in Estonia, a NATO member Baltic country bordering Russia.

The Zapad exercises have created worries, particularly in the Baltics, where political and military leaders have warned that Russia could use the drills to practice their ability to intimidate their neighbors or use them to upgrade military equipment stationed in the region.

The deployment of the NATO surveillance plane on Thursday from its base in Germany to Latvia, where it flew for more than three

hours over the Bay of Riga, was a high-profile display meant to reassure NATO states in the region.

The alliance's Airborne Warning and Control System, or Awacs, planes, commercial jetliners modified with a powerful radar, can detect planes flying up to 400 kilometers away (250 miles), which means they can see Russian aircraft operating in Russian territory or approaching the borders of Lithuania, Latvia or Estonia. The alliance Awacs plane monitored one plane identified as a Russian surveillance craft in the air during the exercises.

NATO said Thursday its Baltic Air Policing Mission scrambled twice, out of Lithuania and Estonia, to identify more than 10 Russian aircraft, fighter jets and bombers. The planes were flying in international airspace over the Baltic Sea from the Russian mainland to Kaliningrad, NATO said. Because the Russian aircraft hadn't filed a flight plan and were flying without using transponders, the NATO planes flew to identify them.

Russia says the drills, which will take place in western Russia and Belarus, will involve 12,700 troops. Western diplomats, however, say that Moscow is underreporting the figure and that the true number of forces involved will be between 70,000 and 100,000, due to a number of other simultaneous, interconnected drills.

General Sir James Everard, NATO's deputy Supreme Allied Commander, said Russia is obscuring how many troops and what kind of military equipment will be participating in the exercise. NATO has said Russia isn't allowing adequate access to the exercise for Western observers.

"It is that lack of transparency that worries people," he said.

In exercises Thursday, as many as 500 paratroopers were deployed to fight against the war games' enemy forces, Russia's Interfax news agency reported. Russia's air force carried out more than 20 flights to test anti-aircraft tracking systems, the military said in a statement.

Early Thursday, one of Russia's premier tank units received its first

orders to deploy to Belarus while supplies were transported westward by train, the Defense Ministry said.

Gen. Everard said the deployment of a tank unit with a storied history, fighting in Stalingrad and Berlin during World War II, was meant as a message. The unit, he said, has some of Russia's most modern equipment and has been upgraded with Moscow's cutting edge electronic warfare capabilities.

"Russia is demonstrating what it has," he said. "I really believe there is some symbolism in the deployment, there is a message there."

Alliance officials say increased watchfulness is needed during and after the exercises because Russia used the cover of military exercises to intervene in Ukraine in 2014 and in Georgia in 2008.

Russia, however, has said the exercises aren't a cover for anything dubious and that Moscow has the right to exercise its troops.

"We believe that inflating passions around these exercises is absolutely provocative. It's a normal practice for any country," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, adding the Mr. Putin was likely to appear at some stage of the exercise.

In advance of the Zapad exercises, NATO boosted the number of jet fighters conducting the air policing mission. The U.S. sent seven F-15 fighters to replace four Polish F-16s in Lithuania. In Estonia, Belgium is flying air policing missions.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

U.S. Keeps Iran Nuclear Deal in Place but Imposes Other Sanctions

Felicia Schwartz in London, Laurence Norman in Brussels and Ian Talley in Washington

6-8 minutes

Updated Sept. 14, 2017 5:54 p.m. ET

The Trump administration extended U.S. sanctions relief to Iran as part of its 2015 nuclear agreement, senior U.S. officials said Thursday, but levied new punitive measures over Tehran's ballistic missile program, cyberattacks and terrorism support.

Administration officials announced the decisions simultaneously, moving to keep a modicum of economic pressure on Iran despite reluctantly preserving the nuclear deal, in keeping with the strong preference of European allies.

As part of the nuclear deal, the U.S. agreed to waive a wide range of sanctions, renewing the waiver every 120 days to ensure Iran abides by its commitments. Those sanctions, along with a plunge in oil prices, had originally pressured Tehran to the negotiating table.

The nuclear deal's fate remains uncertain, however, as the Trump administration continues a review of Iran policy. Senior administration officials said the waiver is an interim decision, pending final policy determinations.

State Department and Treasury officials have been shuttling to Europe as the administration weighs its position on the nuclear deal, seeking support for tightening the agreement as well as for action on what Washington sees as other Iranian provocations in the region, outside the scope of the nuclear agreement.

"We must take into account the totality of Iranian threats, not just Iran's nuclear capabilities," said Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, speaking in London on Thursday alongside his U.K. counterpart, Boris Johnson.

The new U.S. Treasury sanctions targeted 11 firms and individuals, including an Iranian engineering company working with the country's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, two Ukrainian airline firms and an Iranian computer firm accused of conducting a series of cyberattacks on U.S. financial institutions. Treasury's actions add to a half-dozen rounds of sanctions levied this year.

Mr. Trump is nearing another deadline in October, when he must decide whether to certify to Congress that Iran is in compliance with the terms of the nuclear deal. He has twice informed Congress that Iran is meeting its obligations, but told The Wall Street Journal in July he doesn't expect to do so again.

U.S. officials said a final decision on the certification due in October hasn't been made and that it is unclear what the president will do.

The United Nations nuclear watchdog, which is in charge of inspecting Iranian activities, said again Monday that Iran is abiding by the agreement.

As it weighs its options in Washington, the Trump administration also is exploring ways to address its Iran concerns with European allies. Washington wants tougher inspections of Iranian sites, and has problems with Iran's continued missile tests and the expiration over the next decade of limits on Iran's nuclear activities.

Discussions about the terms of the deal are expected to be a focus of

meetings on the sidelines of next week's gathering of world leaders for the annual United Nations General Assembly meeting.

U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May discussed Iran in a meeting with Mr. Tillerson Thursday and reaffirmed her commitment to the deal, a spokesman said.

As one option, Mr. Trump could send the issue to Congress and urge lawmakers to debate the deal, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley has said.

Under the terms of a U.S. law passed when the Iran deal was reached, Mr. Trump must certify Iran is complying with the deal every quarter. If he doesn't, Congress would have 60 days during which it could reimpose sanctions.

Such a move could give Mr. Trump leverage to negotiate stronger constraints on Iran's nuclear program, critics of the 2015 agreement said.

"President Trump's commitment to decertify, and the credible threat he could walk away from the nuclear accord, are motivating Europeans to come on board with ways to fix it," said Mark Dubowitz, chief executive of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, who has advised the Trump administration.

Former officials, Democrats and some experts fear this approach could lead to the deal's collapse and raise questions among European about U.S. credibility on other international commitments.

The three European governments that helped negotiate the accord—the U.K., France and Germany—repeatedly have said they support the agreement. Russia and China, which also negotiated the agreement, continue to back it.

But to keep Washington on board with the deal and ensure the region's expanding economic links with Iran are protected, European governments have responded. Officials earlier this year recommended ways to tighten oversight of the agreement, including a greater focus on commitments Iran made not to work on the weaponization of nuclear material.

French President Emmanuel Macron said last month that while there is no alternative to the current agreement, other arrangements could deal with Iran's ballistic missile program and to ensure Iran doesn't ramp up its nuclear activities as key restrictions start to lift in coming years.

The British government also said, in its response to a parliamentary report on July 4, "it is open to discussions on longer-term plans to prevent Iran...from acquiring nuclear weapons capability."

Iranian officials have denounced proposals for inspections at military sites and have ruled out a renegotiation of the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Iran Foreign Minister Javad Zarif tweeted: "The #JCPOA is not (re)negotiable. A 'better' deal is pure fantasy."

—Jenny Gross in London contributed to this article.

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Appeared in the September 15, 2017, print edition as "U.S. Renews Iran Sanctions Waiver, but Adds Others."



Iran Nuclear Deal Critics Push Plan for 'Global Economic Embargo'

Paul McLeary | 1 hour ago

8-10 minutes

Opponents of the Iran nuclear deal are pushing a proposal that calls for President Donald Trump to declare

that Tehran has failed to comply with the agreement and to threaten an unprecedented economic

embargo designed to rattle the regime.

The document, which has been circulating on Capitol Hill and in the

White House, says the president should declare to Congress next month that the deal is no longer in the national security interest of the United States. Then the president would make clear his readiness to hit Iran with a “de-facto global economic embargo” if it failed to meet certain conditions over a 90-day period, including opening military sites to international inspectors.

“This would be a 21st century financial version of [John F.] Kennedy’s Cuba quarantine,” according to a copy of the proposal obtained by Foreign Policy. The embargo would involve reimposing sanctions lifted under the deal, as well as additional measures including restrictions on oil exports.

The unsigned memo was written by Richard Goldberg, a former Republican congressional aide who has long advocated tough action against Iran. The document has been shared with officials in the Trump administration and Republican lawmakers in Congress, sources familiar with the memo told FP.

“This is a hand grenade thrown into the middle of the Iran debate,” said a source who has discussed the proposal with congressional offices.

The leaked memo is the latest bid by critics of the nuclear deal to shape the White House debate on the issue after a number of Iran hawks were forced out of the White House, including chief strategist Steve Bannon and Derek Harvey, who served on the National Security Council. Another prominent neoconservative and opponent of the Iran deal, former U.N. Ambassador John Bolton, opted to publish his own policy memo last month after acknowledging that he no longer had access to the Oval Office.

The memo from Goldberg, who was a senior aide to former Republican Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois, is designed to “help key policymakers in the administration think outside the box and spur more creative conversations,” said a second source familiar with the discussions behind the document.

Senior officials in the Trump administration, including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Defense Secretary James Mattis, have so far

advised the president to stick to the nuclear deal, even though he repeatedly denounced it as a presidential candidate and vowed to tear it up.

The 2015 Iran nuclear accord, negotiated between Tehran and world powers including the United States, imposed restrictions and inspections on the country’s nuclear program in return for the lifting of an array of crippling economic sanctions. Under a congressional law separate from the deal, the president must certify to lawmakers every 90 days whether Iran is abiding by the deal and whether lifting sanctions remains in the country’s national security interest.

Trump has previously certified that Iran was in compliance with the accord, but he did so reluctantly, complaining to aides about the options presented to him. He has signaled that he might decertify Iran at the next deadline in mid-October.

Tillerson told reporters on Thursday that the Trump administration has yet to make a decision.

“President Trump has made it clear... We must take into account the totality of Iranian threats, not just Iran’s nuclear capabilities — that is one piece of our posture towards Iran,” he said, speaking alongside British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson from London. “In our view, Iran is clearly in default of these expectations” of the nuclear deal, he added.

Trump faced another deadline on Thursday on the nuclear accord. The president decided to continue to waive a series of economic sanctions that were lifted under the deal. The State Department said the move would allow the United States to “maintain some flexibility.”

But speaking to reporters Thursday aboard Air Force One, Trump once again slammed the nuclear agreement and hinted at a possible change in course next month.

“You’ll see what I’m going to be doing very shortly in October,” said Trump, en route to Washington after visiting storm-hit areas in Florida.

“The Iran deal is not a fair deal to this country. It’s a deal that should not have ever been made... We are not going to stand what they are doing with our country. They’ve violated so many different elements

and they’ve also violated the spirit of that deal.”

One source who has advised the White House on the issue told FP that the president’s staffers are struggling to “thread the needle” and provide him with options that allow him to put more pressure on Iran and break with the policies of the Barack Obama administration while avoiding a precipitous withdrawal from the nuclear deal. White House and Defense Department officials are deeply concerned about the potential risks of Iranian retaliation against thousands of U.S. troops deployed in Iraq and Syria who are in close proximity to Tehran-backed militias.

With more hawkish voices no longer holding senior positions in the White House and the deadline fast approaching, opponents are vying for the president’s ear, promoting their stance in the public arena.

In a speech last month, Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., made the case why the administration would be justified in decertifying Iran under U.S. legislation. Haley suggested that Congress could then debate whether to reimpose sanctions on Iran. But the memo leaked Thursday calls for going a step further — by threatening a large-scale economic embargo if Iran did not open access to more nuclear sites or step back from its pursuit of ballistic missile technology.

“The President is looking for a path to ‘decertification’ that can build consensus among his national security advisers, especially those who fear the question: what next?” the memo states. “Establishing a credible threat of a total U.S. financial embargo in-waiting would enhance U.S. diplomatic leverage to curb Iranian illicit behavior and allow for a period of further evaluation at the end of the next 90-day period.”

The memo also argues that the threat of a massive economic embargo would need to persuade Iran that it would not have enough time to “break out” and build a nuclear weapon in 12 months before sanctions strangled its economy and threatened the regime’s stability.

“Iran must believe that if the U.S. pursues an immediate global sanctions embargo, the timeline of

regime instability and economic collapse could be faster than nuclear ‘breakout,’” it notes.

The proposal is designed to address a “range of concerns about decertification, including the big ‘What happens next?’ question,” said the source who had discussed the memo with congressional offices. “It’s a sign that the debate is moving from whether to decertify to how to decertify.”

Meanwhile, supporters of the deal, including former senior officials and diplomats in the Obama administration, are engaged in their own political lobbying effort. They argue that international inspectors have found Iran to be complying with the nuclear agreement, and that any attempt by the Trump administration to withdraw or undermine the deal through unilateral action would have disastrous consequences and possibly lead to a military confrontation.

Colin Kahl, who served as former Vice President Joe Biden’s national security advisor, told reporters in a teleconference on Wednesday that unilateral U.S. sanctions would be opposed by European allies and would not have the same impact as those introduced with international support before the 2015 deal.

China, India, and other countries could decide to buy oil despite U.S. warnings and sanctions, and Washington could find itself in a trade war with some of the world’s biggest economies, Kahl said.

“This is precisely a scenario that the hard-liners in Iran might love,” he said. “That is, using the fact that the U.S. is out of step with the rest of the international community to drive a wedge between us and Europe, between us and the Chinese and the Russians on this issue.”

FP’s *Robbie Gramer* contributed to this article.

This article was updated with State Department comments on extending sanctions relief and President Trump’s remarks to reporters.

Photo credit: ATTA KENARE/AFP/Getty Images



Trump Signals He Will Choose Approach on Iran That Preserves Nuclear Deal (UNE)

David E. Sanger

7-9 minutes

Iranians walked near a billboard in Tehran in June that featured portraits of Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, left, and

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who died in 1989. Atta Kenare/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

WASHINGTON — President Trump kept the Iran nuclear deal alive on Thursday as a critical deadline lapsed, a sign that he is stepping

back from his threat to abandon an agreement he repeatedly disparaged. He is moving instead to push back on Iran's ambitions in the Middle East in other ways.

Thursday's congressionally imposed deadline, to renew an exemption to sanctions on Iran suspended under the 2015 deal, was significant because had the president reimposed economic punishments on Iran, he would have effectively violated the accord, allowing Tehran to walk away and ending the agreement. But Mr. Trump was convinced by top Cabinet members and aides that he would also blow up alliances and free Iran to produce nuclear weapons material.

The move was more consequential than the decision the president faces in October about whether to recertify to Congress that Iran is in compliance with the deal, which has no effect on the nuclear agreement itself.

Though Mr. Trump insisted that he has not settled on an overall Iran strategy and that he would announce one next month, administration officials said they were already trying to refocus on using military and economic leverage to counter Iran's growing influence in the Middle East.

The approach, which aides said Mr. Trump came to reluctantly in a series of National Security Council meetings, is part of a pattern that has emerged in the president's attempts to keep his campaign promises. Falling short in some cases, including on his hard line on immigration, Mr. Trump has portrayed the outcome as consistent with his stated objectives.

Returning to Washington on Air Force One on Thursday after touring hurricane-ravaged South Florida, Mr. Trump again criticized the Iran agreement, but he talked around the question of whether he would adhere to it. Instead, he

promised other action against Iran.

"We are not going to stand for what they're doing to this country," he told reporters. "They have violated so many different elements, but they've also violated the spirit of that deal. And you will see what we'll be doing in October. It will be very evident."

The International Atomic Energy Agency has said Iran has complied with its commitments under the arrangement, including inspections.

An approach that stops short of leaving the agreement is unlikely to satisfy its conservative critics, who attacked it as President Barack Obama's cave-in to Iran, an American adversary of nearly four decades. Nor does it promise to satisfy those who see the deal as a building block for engagement with Iran.

Even Washington's closest ally, Britain, has openly split with those in the administration arguing to ditch the accord. At a news conference in London on Thursday with Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, Britain's foreign minister, Boris Johnson, noted that "the North Korea crisis shows the importance of having arrangements such as the J.C.P.O.A.," using the acronym for the formal name of the agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

He called it "a position you and I have both adopted," underscoring Mr. Tillerson's now widely acknowledged disagreement with Mr. Trump over the importance of the deal.

Mr. Johnson added that in Iran, "a country of 80 million people, many of them young, potentially liberal, could be won over — could be won over to a new way of thinking." He said that Iranians should see the economic benefits of the nuclear deal and that he had emphasized the point to Mr. Tillerson and other American officials.

Mr. Trump's gradual movement on Iran has been seen as a bellwether of a foreign policy shift underway in

the White House, especially since the ouster of Stephen K. Bannon, his former strategist. Mr. Bannon had made confrontation with China and Iran a central element of his approach to reasserting American pre-eminence around the world.

Two of the president's remaining advisers, Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, his national security adviser, and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, are known for hawkish views on Iran. But they do not bring to the debate a sense that the United States is engaged in a clash of civilizations against the country or its ideology. Instead, they have pressed for a quiet escalation of economic and military pushback against Tehran's activities, including support for President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and terrorist groups as well as cyberattacks on American and Arab targets.

The Treasury Department did announce new economic sanctions on Thursday against individuals associated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the Quds Force, which is considered a channel to terrorist groups, and companies involved in hacking against American financial institutions in 2011 and 2012.

In announcing the new sanctions, a senior administration official, who insisted on anonymity while briefing a large group of reporters, said that over the past few years, the United States had focused too narrowly on nuclear issues and ignored Iran's malign activities. But the administration made no mention of the 2016 indictment of seven Iranians for their involvement in that hacking.

It is unclear whether Mr. Trump can persuade his supporters to forget about promises to scrap the agreement, and to focus anew on extending it. Even advocates of the deal in the Obama administration admit to its shortcomings, including the failure to get Iran to give up all enrichment of uranium. Iran's nuclear facilities remain open but are operating at very low levels.

Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, tweeted on Thursday that the agreement he reached with his counterpart at the time, Secretary of State John Kerry, was not renegotiable. "A 'better' deal is pure fantasy," he wrote. "About time for U.S. to stop spinning and begin complying, just like Iran."

Mr. Zarif will be in New York next week for the opening of the United Nations General Assembly, as will Mr. Tillerson. The two men have never met, nor talked, and there are no plans to change that.

Mr. Trump plans to make concerted moves against Iran and North Korea, a centerpiece of his speech to the General Assembly on Tuesday, administration officials say. But it is unclear how specific he will get.

"As they slowly clear their way toward a policy, they clearly believe it is very important that the U.S. push back on the Iranians," Kenneth M. Pollack, a scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, said of Trump administration officials on Thursday.

But they appear to have concluded that rather than unravel the deal, they need to find ways to renegotiate elements of it, he added.

Mr. Tillerson has argued that it is possible to both retain the existing deal and get allies on board for extending the duration of the restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities, while negotiating over Iran's development and testing of ballistic missiles.

But he is clearly walking a fine line. It is possible, White House officials say, that Mr. Trump will stop short of blowing up the accord but still insist on declaring to Congress next month that Iran is violating its terms. Such a move would not affect the future of the agreement itself, while a reimposition of congressional sanctions would have violated its terms.

nonproliferation professionals is proof that Trump's instincts are not always wrong.

Like the International Atomic Energy Agency and the other five nations that signed the JCPOA, the 80 experts say that Iran has been complying with its terms. They worry that ditching the deal because of "unsupported contentions of Iranian cheating" would cancel out the deal's main achievement, which is "reducing the risk" of Tehran's

**NATIONAL
REVIEW
ONLINE**

Tobin : Trump Should Decertify Iran Nuclear Deal, Ignore Experts

8-10 minutes

The experts all agree. They are very nervous about the Trump administration's continued dithering about whether it will again certify Iran's compliance in the nuclear deal. As the *New York Times* helpfully pointed out in an article about a joint letter signed by what we are told is a list of 80 of the world's leading authorities on nuclear nonproliferation, the experts

believe that Trump's inclination to ditch the deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA) has nothing to do with "the merits" of the question.

Much of his national-security team reportedly seeks to persuade Trump to keep the deal, despite his publicly expressed belief that it is a mistake. But the letter from the experts should make him doubly suspicious of their arguments.

Among the many factors that led to Trump's unexpected victory last November was a deep and abiding skepticism among many voters about the wisdom of experts. To his supporters, Trump, the ultimate non-expert on most policy issues, had the savvy to do the right thing even on topics to which neither he nor they had ever previously given much serious thought. While that cynicism is not always wise, the groupthink in the foreign-policy establishment and among

getting a bomb. They insist that whatever complaints the U.S. might have about Iranian behavior since the deal went into effect are irrelevant because the whole point of the negotiation was to focus solely on the nuclear-proliferation issue and nothing else. They predict that a Trump decision to blow up the deal will only lead to Iran's resuming nuclear activity and will make it impossible for the international community to do anything about it.

Trump should ignore their arguments and those inside the administration who are echoing them. It's wise to have some skepticism about experts' opinions; their consensus can have little to do with achieving the goals they're tasked with accomplishing. But the problem is not only that the deal was a bad one. It's also that plenty of experts place more value on diplomacy per se — getting a piece of paper signed and then defending its value — than on the conviction that diplomacy will stop Iran from getting a bomb.

The agencies that monitor the deal all agree that Iran has kept to its terms. But their certification of Iran's compliance vindicates Obama's critics, who warned that once in the deal was in place, the signatories' desire to preserve it would lead them to ignore a host of small violations. Over the past three years, the IAEA and Washington have routinely ignored reports about a variety of problems, including obstruction of inspections, illegal attempts to purchase nuclear and missile technology, and exceeding the limits on uranium enrichment and production of heavy water.

Viewed in isolation, each violation is insufficient to justify threatening Iran

with new sanctions or an end to the deal. So the signatories ignore or rationalize the infractions. In the negotiations that led to the deal, Obama and the secretary of state jettisoned their demand that Iran end its nuclear program and stop advanced nuclear research, and that it concede it had no right to enrich uranium. They always saw getting an agreement on any terms as more important than the details. The same applies to keeping it in place despite multiple violations.

That's why the arms-control community wound up endorsing a deal that did not put an end to the Iranian threat; at best, it kicked the can down the road for a few years on proliferation.

But the point of isolating the Islamist republic via sanctions wasn't to "reduce the risk" of a nuclear Iran; it was to end the risk altogether. Even if Iran is complying with the terms of the JCPOA, it allows them to go on working toward a bomb. Moreover, the JCPOA expires within a decade, so the deal can't be said to be doing much to make the world safer.

In order to be a true success, the JCPOA would have to prevent a breakout — not be in position to sound the alarm after it's too late to do anything about it.

The 80 experts assert in their letter that the JCPOA's main achievement is to make it "very likely" that future Iranian efforts to produce a bomb would be "detected promptly." That is setting a very low bar. Leaving aside the sketchy nature of the intelligence that the West has about Iran's nuclear program, and that the inspections mandated by the deal don't include military facilities, there is little reason to have confidence

that monitoring is working. And prompt detection of a nuclear "breakout" won't mean much if it doesn't give an international community that is already predisposed to complacency the time to act. In order to be a true success, the JCPOA would have to *prevent* a breakout — not be in position to sound the alarm after it's too late to do anything about it.

But just as important is something that Trump has repeatedly pointed out, only to be told that he doesn't "get it."

Obama believed that the deal would be an object lesson in the wisdom of multilateralism and diplomacy and that it would give Iran an opportunity to "get right with the world." But what has happened since his signature foreign-policy achievement has conclusively demonstrated that Obama's hopes were pipe dreams.

Buoyed by the end of sanctions and the release of frozen assets, Iran has doubled down on a foreign policy whose goal is regional hegemony. Iran remains the leading state sponsor of international terrorism. What's worse, Obama's desire for a nuclear deal, at almost any cost, made the U.S. ignore Iranian threats. That's why the U.S. tacitly allowed Iran to intervene in Syria while also consolidating its influence in Shia-dominated Iraq. That has led to the creation of what, for all intents and purposes, is an Iranian land bridge that extends from Tehran all the way to Lebanon, which is dominated by the mullahs' Hezbollah auxiliaries.

For all of his faults, Trump's instinctive desire to end the nuclear deal is more reality-based than the arguments of his critics.

The JCPOA treated nonproliferation as the prime objective of Iran policy, and it made only weak attempts to reach this goal. The consequences are far-reaching. Iran is still on a path to a bomb — made more certain by the fact that its nuclear program now has the West's seal of approval. And it's also strengthened by the economic carrots that came when the stick of sanctions was removed. Iran's renewal of its alliance with Hamas — which had been broken off over a disagreement about the Syrian civil war — will enrich another terror group while also giving Tehran the ability to start a three-front war on Israel at a time of its own choosing.

Trump wants good relations with Moscow and is prioritizing the war on ISIS; that has led him to mimic Obama's policy and acquiesce to the permanence of Russian and Iranian forces in Syria that won the civil war for the Assad regime. At this point, there may be no walking back that blunder. But if there is to be any hope of preventing Iran from becoming a regional hegemon, Trump will have to roll back the nuclear deal.

In this case, the experts are not only wrong on the facts, but they are also looking at the situation through the wrong end of the telescope. For all of his faults, Trump's instinctive desire to end the nuclear deal is more reality-based than the arguments of his critics. He should stop listening to them and begin the process of decertifying the nuclear agreement.

— Jonathan S. Tobin is the opinion editor of *JNS.org* and a contributor to National Review Online.



Lake : Fans of Iran Nuke Deal Start to Acknowledge Its Flaws

by Eli Lake
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stories by Eli Lake

7-9 minutes

National Security

Maybe now the U.S. and European allies can close up loopholes and restrict Tehran.

September 14, 2017, 11:07 AM EDT

The restraints currently on Iran aren't sufficient.

Photographer: Stringer/AFP/Getty Images

The public line from the supporters of the Iran nuclear deal in the last two years has been clear. The Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action, as the core agreement is known, is wonderful. As Barack Obama said after its negotiations were completed in 2015: "There's a reason why 99 percent of the world thinks that this is a good deal: It's because it's a good deal."

And you will encounter this kind of thing on social media today.

All of this is reminiscent of what journalist David Samuels described in 2015 as an echo chamber of prominent arms-control experts, sympathetic journalists and Obama administration staffers deployed to sell the nuclear bargain to the public and Congress. Their party line is that the deal is the best possible way to limit Iran's nuclear rise.

Nonetheless, many of these experts and former officials are also beginning to acknowledge that the nuclear deal they sold in 2015 is flawed. Next month, the Brookings Institution will host an off-the-record meeting of policy experts -- some who favored the deal, some who oppose it -- to discuss how to address the nuclear agreement's flaws.

The State Department's former special adviser for nonproliferation and arms control, Bob Einhorn, invited these nonproliferation experts to "one or more workshops to address the nuclear deal's 'sunset' problem," which he said was the risk that, "when key nuclear restrictions of the JCPOA expire, Iran will be free to build up its nuclear capabilities, especially its

enrichment capacity, and drastically reduce the time it would need to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon."

This was a key objection voiced by Israel in 2015 when it publicly opposed Obama's deal with Iran. Between 2025 and 2030, the agreement to limit Iran's stocks of low-enriched uranium and the number of centrifuge cascades it can operate will expire, allowing Iran to erect an industrial-scale nuclear program if it chooses.

At the time, Israel's objections were dismissed and derided by the White House. Obama called the deal's critics warmongers.

Today, former Obama officials are singing a different song. Einhorn, who served from 2009 to 2013 in

the Obama administration, told me: "Everyone recognizes that the deal is not ideal. I think President Obama would say the deal is not ideal." He added: "There have been all kinds of ideas for how it can be strengthened. Strong supporters of the deal would acknowledge that. Let's think of a strategy for how some of its shortcomings can be remedied."

Iran has continued to test ballistic missiles and has warned it won't allow inspections of military sites -- highlighting ambiguities in the agreement. Einhorn's quiet effort coincides with a new Trump administration strategy that looks to use the president's decertification of Iranian compliance with the deal as leverage to negotiate additional restrictions that address the sunset provisions.

So far, the echo chamber has opposed this strategy. The fear is that Trump's decertification, which

would not automatically reinstate the crippling sanctions that were lifted as a condition of the deal, would potentially unravel the nuclear agreement and leave the international community with even less transparency about Iran's nuclear program. Congress would have 60 days to debate whether to reimpose those sanctions.

Colin Kahl, who served as Vice President Joe Biden's national security adviser in Obama's second term, told me in an email this week that it was worthwhile to begin looking at the flaws of the agreement, but he opposed any strategy in which Trump would decertify Iran's compliance.

"There is no need to force a crisis over it at this very moment -- as Trump and some deal opponents seem inclined to do -- given that elements of the JCPOA don't begin to sunset until 2026-2031," he wrote. "And, as we engage in this

conversation about possible arrangements to supplement the JCPOA, we should do so in a way that protects and stabilizes the current deal rather than threatening steps that would blow it up." He added that any negotiations to further restrict Iran ought to include "possible positive inducements" for Iran.

Perhaps. But Iran negotiated the current nuclear deal only after the U.S. imposed and enforced sanctions that cut its banking system off from the international economy and cut off its ability to export oil. Those so-called secondary sanctions crippled Iran's economy, because they applied not only to Iran but also to any foreign entities that did business with it.

What's to say the threat of bringing back those sanctions won't persuade America's European allies to try to fix the nuclear deal's flaws? It worked before.

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Ignatius : The right question to ask about the Iran nuclear deal

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

5-7 minutes

Correction: An earlier version of this op-ed misstated the cap on Iran's heavy-water stockpile under the nuclear deal. It is 130 metric tons. This version has been updated.

President Trump. (Linda Davidson/The Washington Post)

The Trump administration, already struggling with a big nuclear problem in North Korea, is about to raise another one by questioning the implementation of the nuclear agreement with Iran.

A senior administration official said that President Trump will share his concerns about Iranian compliance with global leaders gathering next week for the U.N. General Assembly. The official said Trump wants tighter inspection of Iranian facilities and a reexamination of the "sunset clause" that would allow Iran to resume aspects of its nuclear program in 10 to 15 years.

Trump isn't proposing to reopen negotiations but instead is threatening to scuttle the deal altogether if Iran doesn't offer concessions. "He's willing to leave the agreement if we don't... fix the deal," the official said. "He's willing to cut bait and walk away."

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Trump's position reflects his oft-stated view that the Iran nuclear pact is "the worst deal ever negotiated." He has levied this attack without discussing whether U.S. interests would be served by scrapping one of the few successful counterproliferation agreements that exist.

An American rebuff to Iran, for example, would undermine whatever slim hope exists for negotiating a denuclearization agreement with North Korea. And despite White House talk of seeking a "united front" among allies, there's no sign of support among European nations, even those critical of Iranian behavior, such as France. President Emmanuel Macron said last month that while he's concerned about Iran's post-2025 status, "the 2015 agreement is what enables us to establish a constructive and demanding dialogue with Iran."

Trump's apparent hope that Iran will offer unilateral concessions is questioned by Iran experts. "I don't believe Tehran would be ready at all to renegotiate the deal," said Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a former Iranian official who now teaches at Princeton University but remains in touch with his ex-colleagues. He called the idea a "nonstarter."

Olli Heinonen, a former senior official at the International Atomic Energy Agency, said in an interview that the administration's arguments for better Iranian compliance have some merit.

Heinonen argued, for example, that it is a "valid question" whether

Tehran is abiding by the cap on its heavy-water stockpile of 130 metric tons when it allegedly still owns many tons more that have been shipped to Oman and stored there, awaiting buyers. He also said it is "legitimate" to question whether Iran is allowing full inspection of all potential nuclear-related facilities. And he agreed that the sunset provision should be "revisited," rather than "just kicking the can down the road."

Trump's push for concessions on the nuclear agreement is accompanied by sharp criticism of Iranian behavior in regional conflicts. The senior administration official listed a string of what he termed Tehran's "destabilizing" actions through proxies. He charged that Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen have threatened navigation in the Bab al-Mandab Strait with mines and missiles, and that they are installing ballistic missiles in Yemen that could target Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The administration official also charged that Iran is building precision-guided missiles in Syria that could be used against Israel; sending Iraqi Shiite militias into eastern Syria to aid the regime there; and providing deadly "explosively formed penetrators," or EFPs, to Shiite rebels in Bahrain. This last is an especially emotional issue for U.S. commanders because Iran-supplied EFPs killed many American soldiers in Iraq.

A second administration official provided links to 25 media reports to back up the first official's

allegations about Iranian behavior. Some of these appeared in Arab media outlets that are strongly anti-Iran; they couldn't be confirmed independently.

The Trump administration's dossier about Iranian activity is part of a new, get-tough strategy for dealing with Tehran, the first official said. Trump reviewed this approach with his advisers last Friday. He will make a final decision soon about Iran policies, including whether to recertify in October that Iran is complying with the nuclear agreement.

Bill Burns, who as deputy secretary of state helped launch the secret diplomacy that led to the Iran agreement, was blunt about what Trump may be setting in motion. "If we don't certify the agreement, that will be perceived — rightly — as us beginning to walk away from it. That will put us in a weaker, not a stronger, position" in dealing with Iranian behavior.

The right question to ask is the same one as when the deal was being negotiated: Does this agreement, with all its flaws, make the United States and its allies safer than they would be with no agreement? This security metric, it seems to me, still favors keeping the deal.

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Editorial : Israel's strike in Syria should be a wake-up call for Trump

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

4-5 minutes

President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. (Sebastian Scheiner/Associated Press)

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 14 at 7:06 PM

ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu says he's looking forward to meeting "my friend" President Trump next week at the United Nations. But the warm feelings might not be wholehearted. Israel's leaders are deeply disturbed these days by what they see as a mounting threat from Iran and its proxies in Syria — and by the reluctance of the Trump administration to do anything about it.

The gulf between the two allies was made clear last week when, on the same day Israel carried out an audacious bombing raid on a Syrian military facility, Mr. Trump declared at a news conference that "we have very little to do with Syria other than killing ISIS." From Mr. Netanyahu's point of view, that's exactly the problem. The Israeli leader has spoken out in recent weeks against Iran's steps toward "turning Syria into a base of military entrenchment," including the construction of sites to build sophisticated guided missiles for possible use against Israel and its attempt to consolidate control over a land corridor stretching across Syria to Lebanon. He has objected to a cease-fire brokered by Russia and the United States in southern Syria that, Israel says, allows Iranian-backed forces to hold on to positions too close to Israel's border. And he has said that the international deal limiting Iran's nuclear activities should be scrapped or revised.

Throughout the Syrian civil war, Israel has quietly carried out strikes to stop Iran's principal proxy in the region, the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, from acquiring advanced

weapons and to prevent Iran's forces from advancing too far south. According to Israel's Air Force chief, there have been close to 100 such missions. But the Sept. 7 attack was something new. It targeted not a warehouse or convoy but one of the Syrian missile production facilities Mr. Netanyahu referred to, on a base that also was reportedly used for the manufacture of chemical weapons and the barrel bombs used by the regime of Bashar al-Assad against civilians.

which has been working in tandem with Iran.

By expanding into Syria, Iran is escalating what is already a major threat to Israel. Since the war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, Tehran has supplied its client with an arsenal of up to 150,000 rockets, according to Israeli sources. Adding precision missiles to that, as well as a new front along the Golan Heights, could make another war inevitable — one that could become a direct conflict between Israel and Iran.

We don't believe the Trump administration should rupture the nuclear deal, which has restrained Iran's dangerous stockpiling of enriched uranium. But the United States should be taking its own steps to block the Iranian "entrenchment" in Syria that Mr. Netanyahu spoke of. Diplomacy might achieve some of that, but military steps should not be ruled out.

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If it slows the production of those deadly weapons, Israel's attack will have done a service for humanity as well as itself. It also should have served as a wake-up call for the Trump administration. Mr. Trump has been slow to recognize that the United States has vital interests in Syria beyond eliminating the Islamic State — and that those interests don't coincide with those of Russia,

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

ISIS Convoy Reaches Militant-Held Syria After Coalition Stops Strikes, Activists Say

Raja Abdulrahim and Ben Kesling

Rights, which has a network of activists across the country.

4-5 minutes

Updated Sept. 14, 2017 10:19 a.m. ET

BEIRUT—Islamic State militants stranded in the Syrian desert for two weeks have reached their destination in eastern Syria, opposition activists said, after the U.S.-led coalition heeded Russia's request to cease airstrikes on the convoy's route.

The convoy of buses traveled across Syria as part of a controversial deal brokered in August by the Lebanese militia group Hezbollah that allowed 600 people—Islamic State fighters and their families—to withdraw from the Lebanese border in southwestern Syria and head toward its border with Iraq.

The convoy was able to reach Deir Ezzour province, an Islamic State-held area in eastern Syria, after the coalition ended its aerial surveillance and airstrikes on the group, according to the U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human

Col. Ryan Dillon, spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq and Syria, said Thursday morning he couldn't confirm that the buses reached their final destination and said that the coalition hadn't had persistent surveillance of them for days.

The U.S. had been preventing Islamic State convoy from moving toward the Iraqi border by bombing roadways and using aircraft to attack fighters who attempted to move forward. But it set aside those efforts and withdrew U.S. aircraft from the area last week at the request of Russian officials who cited a "deconfliction" agreement between Moscow and Washington, Pentagon officials said in a statement at the time.

The Russian officials said their planes were involved in operations against Islamic State in Deir Ezzour, Pentagon officials said in a statement. At the same time, fighters described as pro-Syrian regime forces advanced past Islamic State convoy. Pentagon officials said they would continue to take steps to prevent Islamic State fighters from moving toward Iraq,

but haven't specified how they intend to stop them.

"From the start of this situation on Aug. 29, we have placed responsibility for the buses and passengers on the Syrian regime, who in conjunction with Lebanese Hezbollah, brokered a deal with ISIS to move its terrorists into Iraq," Brig. Gen. Jon Braga, director of operations for the U.S. coalition, said in a statement.

Previously, the coalition had criticized the deal, launching airstrikes that cratered a road and destroyed a bridge, preventing the convoy from continuing its journey.

The coalition then targeted Islamic State fighters trying to reach the convoy to assist it, striking 85 militants and more than 40 vehicles—describing it as an unexpected boon in the fight against the group.

"It presented an opportunity for the coalition to strike and remove several ISIS fighters and resources from the battlefield," said coalition spokesman U.S. Army Col. Ryan Dillon.

Deir Ezzour is one of Islamic State's last strongholds, but faces separate offensives by Syrian regime forces and the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces.

The deal to allow the convoy safe passage was reached after the Lebanese army and Syrian regime forces backed by Hezbollah launched simultaneous offensives to clear Islamic State from a mountainous Lebanese area bordering Syria.

In return, Islamic State provided information on the remains of eight Lebanese soldiers who had been kidnapped in 2014 and handed over the bodies of two Hezbollah fighters and an Iranian military adviser.

One Hezbollah prisoner who remained with the convoy as insurance for its safe passage was released once it reached Islamic State-controlled territory, according to the Observatory.

The deal was criticized by both the U.S.-led coalition and Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who called it "an insult to the Iraqi people."

"We are fighting terrorism in Iraq and we are killing them in Iraq. We don't send them to Syria," he said.

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at Appeared in the September 15, 2017, print edition as 'ISIS Convoy Reaches Militant-Held Syria.'



A New Round of Syria Talks Start in Astana

Paul McLeary | 1 hour ago

2-3 minutes

A sixth round of negotiations over the Syrian conflict in Syria began Thursday in Astana, Kazakhstan, focused chiefly on the creation of a "de-escalation zone" in Idlib province in northwestern Syria.

Brokered by Russia, Turkey and Iran — and with grudging participation from the United States — the Astana talks are ultimately

meant to bring about a nationwide ceasefire. But thanks to the Assad regime and opposition groups, both of whom have failed to abide with previous agreements, the talks so far have floundered.

Now, negotiators are hoping to carve out a safe zone in Idlib province, whose population has grown precisely as hostilities have wound down in other parts of the country. Over the course of the past year, Idlib has become a "dumping ground" and staging area for groups still opposed to Assad, including the al Qaeda linked coalition Hay'at

Tahrir al Sham. At the same time, previous ceasefires in other provinces have led to population transfers that sent fighters and civilians to Idlib.

In all, the province has absorbed almost one million people since the beginning of the war.

Many analysts worry that Damascus, which has already scuppered previous ceasefire agreements, would be unable to tolerate the continued presence of anti-government groups in the province. In addition, a coalition of

al Qaeda linked groups have set up shop there, too — once again placing the province firmly in the crosshairs of Syria, Turkey, and Iran.

Others are concerned that if talks fail and the now-crowded region becomes an objective of the Assad regime's territorial consolidation, it could lead to another civilian bloodletting on the order of the government's 2016 assault on Aleppo.



US foreign policy: Who is in charge?

The Christian Science Monitor

8-10 minutes

September 14, 2017 Washington—The North Korean nuclear crisis has challenged the Trump administration and its formation of coherent and effective foreign policy like no other.

And like no other international issue, North Korea has demonstrated why nearly eight months into Donald Trump's presidency, many are still wondering who is in charge of US foreign policy — and what its guiding vision is in the era of a president elected on a slogan of "America First."

After President Trump's promise of "fire and fury" over the North's ever-more threatening long-range missile tests, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was forced to glumly reassure Americans that they could "sleep well."

After the US ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, hailed unanimous approval in the Security Council of what she said were the toughest sanctions ever on North Korea, Trump this week contradicted his New York envoy, dismissing the diplomatic victory as "not a big deal" and adding that "those sanctions are nothing compared to what ultimately will have to happen."

Many factors are contributing to a lingering sense of an ad hoc and chaotic foreign policy process, say diplomats, experts, and longtime observers of US foreign policy.

Among the factors are the upheaval — even in the administration's short

existence — in the foreign-policy team, and a secretary of State who has often seemed absent and who has shown no interest in using his high office to be the voice of American foreign policy.

Also important, say former diplomats in particular, is the administration's perspective that the nation's corps of diplomats and foreign-service officers, far from being the civilian counterparts of those defending the nation's security in the military, instead constitute a "swamp" to be drained.

Not a chart, but a vortex

But above everything else, what explains the image of a scattered foreign policy with no clear guidelines directing it, these experts say, is that the man ultimately in charge is mercurial, runs hot and cold on issues, and doesn't appear to have a set vision guiding his foreign-policy pronouncements.

"We're dealing with something we haven't seen before — a far less structured administration, out of which can come all sorts of things that are unfathomable, because it's the chief executive who is the least disciplined of the group," says Wayne White, a retired diplomat and specialist in Middle East intelligence who is now an adjunct scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington.

"You get the sense," he adds, "that rather than an administrative chart, what you have in this administration's foreign-policy team is a vortex."

The fault lies with the Oval Office and with the president's lack of a "worldview" to guide the administration's policymaking, says Danielle Pletka, vice president for

foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

"The question of foreign policy is a straightforward one. Most presidents — like them or not — have a guiding vision, what it is they stand for, and that signals to foreign counties what we will and won't do and it forms the framework that guides the national security adviser and the secretary of State and others in the policymaking process," Ms. Pletka says. "But I didn't see any worldview after the first 100 days of this White House, and I don't think there is one now."

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson reaches out to begin a handshake with Britain's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson at the end of their press conference after their meeting on Libya at Lancaster House in London on Sept. 14.

Some of Trump's top advisers, notably Mr. Tillerson, have insisted to allies, for example, that "America First" does not mean "America alone." But then why would the president choose the height of tensions with North Korea to savage South Korea's trade deal with the US and threaten to nix it?

Or why make a point of traveling to Poland, a NATO ally on the frontlines of Europe's tensions with Russia, to make a speech that asked if the West has the "will to survive" even as it downplayed the threat of Russian interference in Western elections, including in the US, as Trump did in July?

"Poland is about the last place you'd want to make that kind of statement, given the deep fear there of Russia," says Mr. White. "But it leads to all kinds of doubts and

insecurity and confusion about what US policy really is in places well beyond Poland."

Other diplomatic experts say they do see the makings of an effective foreign-policymaking team in the Trump administration — as long as that team is not constantly blindsided by the president.

"I don't agree with those who say there is no normalcy whatsoever" in the foreign-policy structure, says Peter Feaver, a professor of political science and public policy at Duke University in Durham, N.C.

'Super-powered' team

What he sees taking shape is a "super-powered national security team" — comprised of Tillerson, Defense Secretary James Mattis, and national security adviser H.R. McMaster — that he says has already demonstrated effective policymaking.

The Trump national security team is even showing better coordination and unity than did the Powell-Rumsfeld-Rice team that served President George W. Bush, says Dr. Feaver, who served as a special adviser on national security strategy in the Bush White House.

The team works well as long as the three are allowed to "be in charge and run things," he says. Where things go awry, Feaver adds, is when Trump doesn't like what the three come up with — or when he makes a spontaneous statement that contradicts the policy the three have crafted.

"The risk is that when the three powerhouses come up with a policy the president isn't comfortable with — the best example to date is probably Afghanistan — it misfires,"

says Feaver. He notes that an Afghanistan plan was first presented to Trump in March – but then was hashed out for another five months over the president's distaste for the plan.

The other wild card the national security team has to deal with is Trump's habit of tweeting or making off-the-cuff remarks in public that veer away from discussed policy. "Things can seem settled, and then a new unscripted statement from the president can drive policy in a new direction," Feaver says.

But for many foreign policy experts, the picture of a strong three-man national security team obscures the problem they see of a weak secretary of State who has willingly

ceded his role as voice to the world of US foreign policy.

Division of labor?

Tillerson's focus on State Department reform – really a hefty downsizing – has won him suspicions among the department's domestic and overseas staff and critics on Capitol Hill. Indeed, Congress seems unlikely to allow the reform plan, which was to be unveiled Friday, to ever fully see the light of day.

Tillerson's absence from the public stage has opened the way for Ambassador Haley, a polished politician and former governor of South Carolina, to emerge as the administration's strong voice on issues like North Korea. Some say

it's simply a neat division of labor between Tillerson and Haley given each one's talents, but others say the US is not well-served by a secretary of State who does not have a strong global presence.

"Certainly it matters that we have a secretary of State who is perceived by friends and enemies alike as the chief representative of US foreign policy and who is capable of multitasking in his own job," says Pletka.

Tillerson's low profile and incessant rumors about a distant relationship with the president have many in the foreign policy community and the media waiting for the former ExxonMobil chief's departure.

'Waiting for Godot'

But Feaver says that expectation fits a pattern of many diplomats and others in the foreign policy community waiting for the administration's rocky initial months to settle down and yield a more conventional presidency, including a more traditional foreign-policy-making process.

"It's something of a 'Waiting for Godot' kind of scenario," he says, ticking off the many moments over the Trump campaign and then presidency when pundits and others predicted a shift to more normal operations.

"There's a lot of talk and expectation, but what they're waiting for never arrives."

ETATS-UNIS

POLITICO The Loneliest President

By MICHAEL KRUSE

24-31 minutes

"ISOLATED?" read the subject line.

"Friend," Donald Trump wrote recently to supporters in a fundraising email. "The fake news keeps saying, 'President Trump is isolated.' ... They say I'm isolated by lobbyists, corporations, grandstanding politicians, and Hollywood. GOOD! *I don't want them,*" he fumed, employing italics for emphasis.

Story Continued Below

Sent on August 28, two days after Hurricane Harvey inundated Houston, Trump's defiant appeal acknowledged the mounting perception that nearly eight months into his first term—and in the aftermath of his racially divisive response to the violence in Charlottesville—he's never been politically more lonely. He's at odds with Congress—including leaders and members of his own party—and his deal-making with Democrats is angering some of his most ardent conservative supporters. He's been abandoned and censured by art leaders, business leaders and world leaders. His Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida is bleeding bookings. And he's losing favored aides due to the actions of his own chief of staff, General John Kelly, who restricts access to the president with the diligence of a border guard. Last week, the *New York Times* described Trump as a "solitary cowboy," reminding readers he

once called himself "the Lone Ranger."

His critics might see his growing isolation as a product of his political inexperience—an aversion to the norms of the legislative process, a penchant for topsy-turvy management. But as unprecedented as this might be in the annals of the West Wing, it's merely a continuation of a lifelong pattern of behavior for Trump. Take away the Pennsylvania Avenue address, the never-ending list of domestic and international crises, and the couldn't-be-higher geopolitical stakes—and this looks very much like ... Trump throughout his entire existence. Isolated is how he's always operated.

The middle son of a stony, workaholic father with whom he had an "almost businesslike" relationship, Trump is a double divorcee, a boss with a professed distaste for having partners or shareholders, a television-tethered, hamburger-eating homebody and a germaphobe who has described shaking hands as "terrible," "barbaric" and "one of the curses of American society." He's been a loner most of his life. At New York Military Academy, everybody knew him but few of his fellow cadets knew him well. In college, he made no friends he kept. After he moved to Manhattan, he lived in a sealed-off triplex penthouse, relied on a small, family-first cadre of loyalists and mainly made more enemies than allies (the mayor was a "moron," elite "so-called social scene" types were "extremely unattractive people," and on and on). At his casinos in Atlantic City,

he was adamant about not mingling with the gambling masses. Now, in Washington, he's a two-scoops cable-watcher inside the White House when he's not weekending at his clutch of protective, name-branded bubbles. Trump, forever, has collected an array of acquaintances, fellow celebrities and photo-op props, while friendships mostly have been interchangeable, temporary and transactional.

Trump waves while speaking outside of the Annaville Fire House after attending a briefing on Hurricane Harvey in Corpus Christi, Texas, on August 29, 2017. | JIM WATSON/AFP/Getty Images

"He was and is a lonely man," Jack O'Donnell, a former Trump casino executive, told me.

"One of the loneliest people I've ever met," biographer Tim O'Brien said in an interview. "He lacks the emotional and sort of psychological architecture a person needs to build deep relationships with other people."

It's been this way always, because he's always been foundationally, virulently untrusting. "There's a wall Donald has that he never lets people penetrate," a former associate told me. Trump has a dark, dour view of humanity. He considers the world "ruthless," "brutal" and "cruel." Through this zero-sum, dog-eat-dog lens, friends aren't friends—there's no such thing. "They act nice to your face, but underneath they're out to kill you," he wrote in his 2007 book, *Think Big*. "... they want your job,

they want your house, they want your money, they want your wife ..." Why he's like this is the subject of vigorous discussion among psychology experts. The deep-seated influence of his formidable father? The wound of the alcohol-fueled death of his more mild-mannered older brother? Simple genetics? Trump is not self-reflective—"I don't like to analyze myself because I might not like what I see," he told a biographer several years back—but he can be self-aware. And on this front, he's been quite clear, and remarkably consistent.

"My business is so all-encompassing I don't really get the pleasure of being with friends that much, frankly," he said to one interviewer in 1980.

"Most of my friendships are business-related because those are the only people I meet," he said to another 36 years later. "I think I have a lot of friends, and some of the friends I haven't spoken to in many years. ... I mean, I think I have a lot of friends, but they're not friends like perhaps other people have friends, where they're together all the time ..."

Exceptions exist, of course, and Roger Stone is one of them. The inimitable, provocative political operative has known Trump, and has been friends with Trump, since 1979, when Stone was working on Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign and Roy Cohn introduced him to Trump. "It's fun to be his friend," Stone told me. Few people have known Trump longer than Stone, or know him better.

"By definition," Stone said, "I think anyone who has the job is going to be lonely. ... Lincoln wrote extensively about the loneliness of the job."

Roger Stone is an exception to Trump's isolation; the two have been friends since 1979. | Getty

But Trump, well before he was elected to inhabit the Oval Office, was "psychologically lonely and isolated, emotionally lonely and isolated," I suggested to Stone. He's a person who certainly can be socially gregarious and charming—many people say that, because many people have experienced it—but he ultimately prefers to be on his own, I offered. Now that he's president, it seems these "self-isolating" tendencies have been exacerbated. I wondered if Stone agreed.

"I think," Stone said, "that's generally true, yes."

There's been so much focus, understandably and unavoidably, on the various parts of Trump's personality that have helped define his presidency to this point. They are frequently cited as obstacles to his and his administration's success. His driving belligerence. His fleeting attention span. His sweet tooth for chaos. But in the end, his well-established unwillingness, or inability, to make and maintain relationships that matter might be the most politically debilitating. Or it might not be. This elemental character trait seen by many as such a liability hasn't stopped him yet. He is, after all, the most powerful person in the world.

"GOOD!"

"I don't want them."

He means it.

The first people who really noticed Trump's tendency to withdraw were his classmates. As a teenager at New York Military Academy, in upstate Cornwall-on-Hudson, he often disappeared into his solo room in the barracks after dinner. "The reason I went in the first place," Trump himself would say later, "was that I didn't get along with a lot of people." Pictures in yearbooks in the library at the school show Trump morphing from a gangly boy to a sturdy young man, but this much didn't change: Classmate Doug Reichel characterized him to me as "very distant."

"I don't know anyone that he was particularly close to," said Ernie Kirk, a classmate who is now an attorney in Georgia.

"He was so competitive," according to a former roommate, "that everybody who could come close to him he had to destroy."

Donald Trump was a middle child who grew up in Queens, later attending New York Military Academy, Fordham University and the University of Pennsylvania—none of which were schools where he made any lasting friendships. | Donald J. Trump Facebook Page | FACEBOOK

"You just couldn't be friends with him," said Sandy McIntosh, who was two years younger but knew him from home, too, because their families both had cabanas at the Atlantic Beach Club on Long Island. Trump wouldn't laugh at his jokes, or anybody else's, McIntosh recalled. "And you think of humor as a basic, empathic way that friendships are formed—and he just didn't."

"I was not a confidant as to his personal thoughts. No one was," Trump classmate Peter Ticktin wrote not long ago in an email to McIntosh. "He was much to himself. A good guy, but no one's real buddy."

In a recent phone conversation, Ticktin, an attorney in Florida and a supporter of Trump, said Trump at NYMA "did have a little touch of aloofness." But he chalked it up to Trump's rank early in his senior year as the captain of A Company ("part of being a natural leader is not to be everybody's buddy") along with his apparent self-confidence ("he just didn't need to share his deepest thoughts")—and Ticktin also attributed it partly to the strict, draconian atmosphere on campus. "He was nobody's real buddy, but nobody was anybody's real buddy," Ticktin said.

It was the same way, though, at Fordham University in the Bronx, where Trump spent his freshman and sophomore years of college playing on the squash team and wearing a three-piece suit to class. Trump and Brian Fitzgibbon sometimes carpooled to school because their families both lived in Jamaica Estates. They were "friendly," Fitzgibbon said in an interview, but not "friends." "I can't recall any real friendships he had at Fordham," he said. When Trump transferred from Fordham to the University of Pennsylvania, he left without telling people goodbye.

And it was no different, either, down in Philadelphia, where he studied real estate at the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce and boasted in class that he would be bigger than then-nonpareil Manhattan developer Bill Zeckendorf—but, for the most part,

one classmate told the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, Trump "was really off by himself." He didn't participate in extracurricular activities or go to fraternity parties or football games. He returned every weekend to New York to work for his father collecting rents at his outer-borough apartment buildings. "His footprint at Penn was virtually zero," classmate Lou Calomaris told me. "I don't think he had any best friends. I never saw him pal around with *anyone*, quite frankly."

By 1980, Trump had started to make a name and attract attention, but television interviewer Rona Barrett seemed to sense this defining absence.

"Who would you call if you were in trouble?" she asked Trump.

"Maybe I'll call you, Rona," he told her.

"But I'm not your best friend ..."

"No," he said. "I know."

Donald Trump poses in his Manhattan office beside a copy of his book, "Trump: The Art of the Comeback," in 1997. | AP

The whole of the '80s were heady for Trump. He built Trump Tower, his masterwork until "The Apprentice" led to the Oval Office. *The Art of the Deal* was a runaway bestseller, and he talked about running for president. Even his failures, like his ownership of the New Jersey Generals of the second-rate United States Football League, were successes of a sort, because they boosted his national renown, which was actually the point from the start. And yet as ascendant and ubiquitous as he was, Trump was fairly friendless, too.

It wasn't just high society, said George Arzt, a veteran, connected New York politico. "Most of the real estate industry separated themselves from him," Arzt told me. "His personality rubbed people the wrong way."

"Friendship is not a part of his agenda," a Trump business associate told *Newsweek* in 1987. Trump didn't disagree. "I hate to have to rely on friends," he said. "I want to rely on myself." His only "real friends," he added, were family members.

By early 1990, as he confronted self-inflicted financial calamity and marital failure, Connie Chung from CBS returned to where Barrett had probed 10 years before.

"Do you have a best friend?" she asked.

"Well, I have so many different friends," Trump said, "and it'd be hard to say a best friend ..."

"Is your wife a best friend?"

"She's a great friend, she's, uh—I have a father who's a great friend."

"I mean, is there somebody that you really confide in?"

"I tend not to confide. I really tend not to confide. I'm very closed in that sense. I think that's my own, maybe, guarded mechanism."

"Is it that you don't trust people?"

"I don't trust people, no," Trump said, self-assessing in the most explicit possible terms. "I'm a non-trusting person."

On newsstands nationwide at the time of this interview was an extensive conversation in *Playboy*. In it, Trump echoed something he had discussed with Chung, too—the death of his older brother, Fred Trump Jr., and its lasting effects. His brother had been too trusting with too many people, "a fatal mistake," in Trump's estimation, and he had been taken advantage of, and that had led to his alcoholism and finally his demise at only 43 years old. "The lesson I learned," Trump concluded, "was always to keep up my guard one hundred percent, whereas he didn't." He ended up later in the interview musing about the prospect of a President Trump. "He wouldn't trust anyone," Trump said.

"More than condos or casinos, he'd spent his life building defenses—walls to fend off the people around him," Wayne Barrett (no relation to Rona) wrote in 1992 in his seminal early biography of Trump. Even the people closest to him, Barrett said, never "really got past his self-contained wariness."

Ever since, in Trump's long arc, these walls and this wariness have made for one of the clearest, straightest through lines.

He thinks the world is "horrible." He thinks people are "vicious." He thinks they are ceaselessly envious and want what he has. "Trust your instincts," Trump has said. "Trust yourself." But nobody else. "There are so many stories about people who have been decimated by people they trusted," he has said. There's nobody he admires. He has no heroes. "Donald," gossip columnist Cindy Adams once said, "is somebody who's in love mostly with himself."

"Being on the other side of a relationship with someone like me must be difficult," Trump told *People* in 1997.

Including his wives. "It's very hard for somebody to be married to me," he told biographer Michael D'Antonio in 2014.

In *The Art of the Deal*, Trump called his parents "my closest friends." When they died—his father died in 1999, his mother a year later—it was the closest he ever came to crying, he later claimed. "I don't believe in crying," he said in 2005. "... It's just not my thing. I have nothing against it when someone cries, but when I see a man cry I view it as a weakness. I don't like seeing men cry. I'll give you an example. I never met John Gotti, I know nothing about John Gotti, but he went through years of trials. He sat with a stone face. He said, 'Fuck you.'"

Some of the people Trump has called friends over the years. | Clockwise from top left: CRAIG LASSIG/AFP/Getty Images; Ron Galella/WireImage; Jeffrey Asher/Getty Images; Ron Galella/WireImage

Over the years, Trump has labeled many people his friends. Michael Jackson and Jesse Ventura and Tom Brady. Larry King and Don King and Mike Tyson. Newt Gingrich and Sylvester Stallone and Oprah Winfrey and Howard Stern and Elton John. Carl Icahn and Richard Lefrak and Tom Barrack. ("Tom Barrack is to Donald Trump as Bebe Rebozo was to Richard Nixon," said Stone, who has a tattoo of Nixon on his back.) Often, Trump's friends don't respond to requests to talk about the nature of their relationships with him. Sometimes, they have publicists who call to say quietly that they're not actually friends. Trump has called "Little" Marco Rubio a friend. He has called "Lyn" Ted Cruz a friend. He has said he has friends in Europe and Australia and China and Japan. He has, he has said, friends who "aren't Christian," friends who are Jewish, friends who are Muslim.

"I have many, many black friends," he told Don Lemon in 2011.

"I have many friends," he said two years later at CPAC. "Many, many friends."

And three years after that, at a campaign rally in New Hampshire heading into its primary vote, he told people at a rally he has lots of rich friends—but they wouldn't be his friends, anymore, if he became president. "I have no friends, as far as I'm concerned," he said, an applause line, a laugh line, but a line that struck students of Trump as unwittingly spot-on.

"You know who my friends are?" Trump said. "You're my friends."

The cheering crowd.

All presidents, as Roger Stone said, grapple with loneliness. It's a function of the gravity of the position, having to make hard choices nobody else has to or can. But President Trump arrived with the affliction. Looking at the situation in Washington, and thinking back to the college student he knew, Calomaris from Penn invoked Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher, and his most known maxim. "Character is fate."

For Nixon, Calomaris said, it was his paranoia.

Bill Clinton, he said, thought with "the wrong head."

With Trump, will isolation be his undoing?

Chris Ruddy has been friendly with Trump for nearly 20 years. The Newsmax CEO and Mar-a-Lago member considered my questions about the president. "You know Harry Truman's famous line?" he said. "You need a friend in Washington ..." Get a dog. (Truman didn't actually say that, but the point stood.) "He doesn't need to have close friends," Ruddy said.

It's not that simple, Stone said. The trouble, as he sees it, is not that Trump has few friends in Congress, or in the GOP, least of all leaders Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan. "Under no circumstances," Stone said, "should he consider those guys his friends. That's a business relationship. Their interests are very different than his."

Rather, Stone continued, the more pressing issue is that Trump is increasingly isolated within his own White House. "If he has friends," Stone said, "his friends should be in his administration. I guess my greatest criticism would be he has hired people and appointed people who are *not* his friends. Didn't vote for him. Don't share his worldview. Aren't necessarily interested in his long-term success."

Stone added: "It's not clear to me if he understands the dangers and potential damage that's posed by surrounding himself with people who are not loyal to him—but, more importantly, not loyal to his agenda." He named H.R. McMaster. He named Gary Cohn.

"He's very much his own man," Stone said of Trump. "This is not a guy who's ever told what to do, what to say, where to go, who he can meet with, who he can't meet with, who he can talk to, who he can't talk to, where he can travel to. He's really a free spirit and he deeply resents attempts to handle

him or manage him or control him. Which is why ultimately I believe General Kelly will fail."

I asked him if he thinks Trump trusts Kelly.

"Today," Stone said.

I asked him if he, too, like Trump himself, thinks Trump has trouble trusting *anybody*.

"I think," Stone said, "he has the natural suspicions of a Manhattan real estate mogul. That's a cutthroat world."

Nonetheless, when Trump needs friends, or new friends, he can make them, Ruddy reasoned. "I think he saw the presidency as more of a monarchy," Ruddy said. Realizing by now that it's not, he's capable of creating necessary relationships, according to Ruddy—talking days before Trump started dealing, or "beaming and scheming," as his first wife once said, with Democratic leaders Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, whom he's called a "clown."

"I think he's ultra-gifted in the things in politics you need for relationship-building," he said. "He's an impresario at this stuff." Added Ticktin, the pro-Trump NYMA classmate: "Normal socializing with people, I don't think that's ever really been his thing. But he knows how to work a room. He's charming, and he knows how to connect with people in a room and make them feel like they've been acknowledged."

This, though, is a variant of the gap between campaigning and governing, politicking and legislating. Trump self-evidently can do the former. It remains unclear whether he's capable of the latter—the give-something-to-get-something, the slow build of capital that then can be cashed in, not flimsy, news-cycle-feeding installments but the long-game cultivation of critical relationships.

"He's fundamentally a loner," said O'Brien, the biographer. "Along the way"—his whole life—"he hasn't forged deep bonds with other people."

And that's what's been playing out during his presidency, something that was noted early and has been crescendoing ever since, as his original staff—and at least one replacement—has been thinned by firings and resignations.

"He seems both politically and personally isolated these days," David Gergen told the *Washington Post* in April. "He doesn't have anybody whom he trusts," someone who speaks with the president told CNN in May. "He's much more

isolated than he realizes," Newt Gingrich told Fox News in August. "The narcissism and paranoia are issues, but the biggest concern is that Donald Trump trusts no one," Gail Sheehy writes in a forthcoming compilation of essays, *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 27 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President*. "This will be his downfall—or maybe ours."

Louise Sunshine is worried. She's known Trump longer than almost anybody alive. She was a vice president for the Trump Organization from 1973 to 1985. I asked her if she thinks he's feeling isolated.

"Definitely," she said.

"He isolates himself when he finds it convenient," Sunshine went on. It's what he's always done. "Always."

"He's fundamentally a loner," Tim O'Brien, a Trump biographer, said. | Getty

In particular at the points of the greatest duress. Periodically over the last few months, and especially over the last few weeks, I have found myself thinking back to 1990. It's the moment before the current moment when Trump seemed the most isolated and alone. His business was listing, and he was losing inner-circle loyalists. "It's come to be Donald against the world," an adviser told biographer Gwenda Blair at the time. His marriage was over. His oldest son, then 12, angry and hurt, wasn't speaking to him, it would later be reported. In telephone public opinion polls, readers of New York tabloids were siding overwhelmingly with his wife, not him. "When a man leaves a woman, especially when it was perceived that he has left for a piece of ass—a good one!—there are 50 percent of the population who will love the woman who was left," Trump raged to Marie Brenner of *Vanity Fair*.

But past the familiar, reflexive bombast, the early portion of that year always has seemed to me to be an unusual and even unique stretch in the scope of Trump's life. Re-watch that Connie Chung interview, and re-read that *Playboy* conversation, and he presents as not only irritable but rattled—vulnerable, or at least his version. Even his book that came out in 1990, *Surviving at the Top*, is in my mind different from all the other books he's put out over the decades, so many same-sounding collections of business tips and self-help schlock. It has plenty of platitudes, too, but there's also in the text and between the lines a certain detectable pathos. The title itself is an amalgam of a plea and a

lie. That spring, according to *Vanity Fair*, Trump holed up in Trump Tower, in an apartment separate from his soon-to-be-ex up in the penthouse, ordering in burgers and fries from New York Delicatessen, his belly getting soft, his hair getting long, staying on his back in his bed, staying up late, calling people to talk, staring at the ceiling.

"You remind me of Howard Hughes," a friend told him.

"Thanks," Trump said. "I admire him."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Laura Meckler and Kristina Peterson

8-10 minutes

Updated Sept. 14, 2017 10:07 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Top congressional Republicans signaled Thursday that they wouldn't be pressured into enacting an immigration framework reached between President Donald Trump and top Democrats, as conservatives reacted with alarm to news of a fledgling deal to protect young people brought to the U.S. illegally as children.

Mr. Trump, who ran for president on a hard-line immigration platform, jolted many of his own supporters by agreeing with Democrats to pair legal status for the group often called "Dreamers" with enhanced border security measures. The president agreed that the package would omit funding for his promised border wall, and said nothing about including other enforcement measures aimed at finding and deporting people living illegally in the U.S.

It was the second time in a week that Mr. Trump bypassed his party and dealt directly with Democrats. That left GOP congressional leaders excluded, but also relieved them of some of the political burden of delivering on immigration, which has long divided their party, GOP aides said.

The new framework was crafted at a White House dinner Wednesday with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.). No GOP lawmakers were invited.

"We're working on a plan, subject to getting massive border controls," the president said Thursday at the White House. "The wall will come later." He said he was "fairly close"

He wrote about the tycoon turned neurotic hermit in *Surviving at the Top*. "The Howard Hughes story is fascinating to me," Trump told readers, "because it shows that it's possible to fall very far very fast. As time goes on I find myself thinking more and more about Howard Hughes and even, to some degree, identifying with him." He cited Hughes' aversion to germs, and the downsides of fame, like when he's approached in restaurants and people end up "spraying their good wishes all over my food."

"Every time that happens," Trump wrote, "Howard Hughes and his reclusive lifestyle look a little less crazy to me."

Wayne Barrett addressed Trump's interest in Hughes in his biography. Barrett had been reporting on Trump since the late '70s. His book came out in 1992.

"Over the years," Barrett wrote, "he had openly toyed with a final surreal twist to the plot that had become his life—he told friends that he might end up a Howard Hughes-like

recluse, squirreled away, allowing his fingernails to grow longer than his stubby fingers. That poignant script may have appealed to the loner quality in him that had always kept him apart. The Hughes scenario only worked, though, if he could figure out a way back to the top."

He did.

GOP Pushes Back on 'Dreamers' Deal Sought By Trump, Democrats (UNE)

to reaching an agreement with the Democrats.

Mr. Trump said House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) were "on board" with his approach. The GOP leaders responded that Congress would craft any legislative package, and said negotiations would take on a broad set of immigration issues, including enforcement measures beyond border security.

"The president wasn't negotiating a deal last night. The president was talking with Democratic leaders to get their perspectives," Mr. Ryan (R., Wis.) told reporters. "The president understands he's going to have to work with the congressional majority to get any kind of legislative solution."

Mr. McConnell said the fate of the young immigrants should be part of a larger immigration debate, including interior enforcement. "We look forward to receiving the Trump administration's legislative proposal as we continue our work on these issues," he said in a statement.

The leaders weren't specific, but interior enforcement measures favored by conservatives include mandating that businesses use the E-Verify system to check whether applicants can work legally and punishing "sanctuary cities" that don't cooperate with federal immigration enforcement.

In the coming weeks, Mr. Ryan and other GOP leaders will need to decide how large a role to play in a policy fight that has long divided their party, according to lawmakers and aides.

House GOP leaders are starting an immigration working group with Republicans from the Homeland Security, Judiciary and Appropriations committees, including a mix of conservative and more centrist Republicans, an aide said.

Mr. Trump's decision to work with Democrats leaves him owning the issue, giving congressional leaders some political breathing room to pass legislation, GOP aides said. But Republican leaders are already under pressure from conservatives to push back against the president and drive a tougher bargain than he did.

Last week, the president overrode objections from GOP congressional leaders and sided with Democrats on a proposal to attach storm aid to measures to keep the government funded and its borrowing limit suspended until mid-December. Some Republicans fear their own internal divisions and trouble passing health care and other legislation are making Democrats a more appealing negotiating partner for Mr. Trump. Republicans are a group full of "independent-minded folks that have no problem going in a different direction," who still "need to demonstrate that we can govern," said Rep. Bill Huizenga (R., Mich.) "Maybe this is a wake-up call from the White House."

Some Republicans welcomed the rare bipartisanship.

"The word 'agreement' is a good thing around here, and we're not very used to that," said Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R., Neb.). "The country is exhausted politically and sentiments about possibly getting things done are good."

A hard line on immigration was one of the central components of Mr. Trump's presidential campaign, and his administration has ramped up arrests of suspected undocumented immigrants, sought to restrict travel from several countries and slashed admission of refugees. Last week, he followed through on a promise to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which now gives about 690,000 young illegal migrants work authorization and protection from deportation. At the same time, though, he urged

Congress to find a solution for those affected before the protections expire in six months.

"Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military? Really!" Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter Thursday.

That attitude stands in contrast to that of his attorney general, Jeff Sessions, a longtime backer of immigration curbs, who announced the decision to end DACA. He described the program as not just an overreach of executive authority on the part of former President Barack Obama, who created it, but as a wrongheaded move that had encouraged illegal immigration and taken jobs from Americans "by allowing those same illegal aliens to take those jobs."

Democrats saw their power on the rise in a Congress in which they control neither chamber, and the party's leaders appeared to be enjoying the moment. Still, some reacted with skepticism. "There's not a deal until we see it in writing and there's a vote on it," said Rep. Filemon Vela (D., Texas). "This is all pretty loosey-goosey."

Even if the parties agree on a framework, many details have yet to be settled. Among them is whether the young people being protected would get the chance for citizenship or a legal status short of that. The details of border security would also need to be settled. Mrs. Pelosi and Mr. Schumer said Thursday that the border-security measures could include new technology, drones, air support, sensor equipment and rebuilt roads along the border. Mr. Trump said he wants "extreme security, not only surveillance but everything that goes with surveillance."

Mr. Trump said on a visit to Florida Thursday that "we're not looking at citizenship," but Mrs. Pelosi said

their discussion with Mr. Trump involved movement on the proposed Dream Act, legislation that would provide a path to citizenship for some of the childhood arrivals.

Rep. Mark Meadows (R., N.C.), chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, a group of conservative lawmakers, suggested the most problematic part of a deal could be providing the young immigrants a path to citizenship. "It's a problem for the majority of the Republican conference on citizenship," he said

Thursday.

More generally, the deal faces sharp opposition from conservatives who helped power Mr. Trump to office and felt betrayed by the move. The right-wing website Breitbart, run by former Trump adviser Steve Bannon, called the emerging agreement a "full-fledged cave." Conservative writer Ann Coulter asked on Twitter, "At this point, who DOESN'T want Trump impeached?" Opponents immediately labeled the deal "amnesty."

"There's only one thing that cracks President Trump's base and that's if he cracks on immigration," said Rep. Steve King (R., Iowa), a leading immigration foe. "He hasn't heard enough voices reminding him of his campaign promises and I want to remind him of his campaign promises."

Brian Pannebecker, a Trump supporter from Harrison Township, Mich., said any deal regarding DACA must include substantial funding for the border wall. "At the rallies we chanted, 'Build the wall,

build the wall.' That's what we want," he said.

—Siobhan Hughes contributed to this article.

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POLITICO 'Burned' Trump finds comfort with Democrats

By TODD S. PURDUM

8-9 minutes

Over the past forty years, Donald Trump has styled himself as many men: master builder and magic marketer, inconvenient truth-teller, savvy gamer of the system, politically incorrect provocateur. But no role has been more central to his identity than that of peerless deal-maker – until the first frustrating months of his presidency smudged the luster off that gilded brand.

So it shouldn't be surprising that Trump has in the last week sought to strike deals where he can find them – with Democrats – even if many of his aides, supporters and Republicans in Congress think that means he's looking for love in all the wrong places. In fact, Trump's recent outreach to Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi is more readily explainable in terms of the president's ego and psyche than it is in terms of any considered political or legislative strategy.

Story Continued Below

"I think he feels he got burned so bad in the first seven months by the Republican leadership and their inability to do anything that if he wants to get accomplishments on infrastructure or taxes or DACA, that the only way to do it is to work with the leaders of the Democratic Party," said former Ray LaHood, a former Republican congressman and Transportation Secretary under President Barack Obama, referring to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program that has let young illegal immigrants avoid deportation. "The first seven months were just simply a joke."

It remains to be seen whether Trump's agreement with Democratic congressional leaders to raise the debt ceiling – and a more tentative plan to preserve the DACA program while increasing border security – is the beginning of a new period of

accomplishment or merely the latest predictably unpredictable act of a presidency that has been defined by the same. But at a stroke, the president seized control of the Beltway narrative, upended conventional wisdom about his intentions and perhaps his abilities, and has seemed to relish the feeling.

"It's always risky imputing strategy or a change in interest in policy with Trump," said Thomas Mann, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and co-author of the new book, "One Nation After Trump: A Guide for the Perplexed, the Disillusioned, the Desperate and the Not-Yet Deported." "My guess is that he didn't like the vibes about a first year empty of accomplishments and decided Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell had led him astray. So he's rolling the dice, making nice with Chuck and Nancy, hoping to bag a deal or two, shake things up, change the media narrative, get attention away from the Russia investigation. But he hasn't thought anything through to the next steps. He's improvising as he goes, relying on his gut, looking for emotionally satisfying cable news coverage."

The reaction from some of Trump's most ardent allies was swift and unrelentingly negative. Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa), perhaps the hardest immigration hard-liner in Congress, tweeted that the president's base would be "blown up, destroyed, irreparable and disillusioned beyond repair" if his tentative framework for immigration deal held. But it is far from clear just where Trump's base would go, since many of them flocked to him in the first place because they believed the lineup of conventional politicians in both parties left them no other option.

Trump's latest actions may also have the effect of shielding the dwindling ranks of moderate Republicans – and even some party leaders -- who agree with him on preserving the "Dreamers" immigration program for illegal

residents brought here as children, but don't want to be seen as taking a position that might alienate their constituents or most conservative colleagues. Even before Trump's dinner with Pelosi and Schumer, some congressional conservatives had acknowledged they could envision the shape of a possible deal, depending on how far Democrats went to toughen border enforcement. The speed with which Speaker Paul Ryan insisted there was no "agreement" on immigration actually seemed proof enough of how far the president had already moved the ball.

And taking incoming fire from his right flank may be far from the worst thing for Trump's political fortunes, considering that polls show about two thirds of voters think he is doing more to divide the country than to unite it. When Bill Clinton signed a Republican-drafted bill to overhaul welfare in 1996, his fellow Democrat, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, warned that it would be "the most brutal act of social policy since Reconstruction." That turned out not to be true, Clinton's poll numbers rose, and he coasted to re-election against Bob Dole that fall.

But there's a big difference between Trump's position today and Clinton's 20 years ago: Clinton was forced to bargain because the Democrats had lost control of both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years, and his presidency was on the ropes. Trump's party now has majorities in both the House and Senate – albeit somewhat fragile majorities that Trump's congressional allies believe that his uneven performance and his latest actions could well put at risk. And unlike Trump's dinner table diplomacy with the Democrats, conducted over the objections of some of his most senior aides, and with the exclusion of the GOP congressional leadership, Clinton's compromises on welfare and balancing the budget were strongly backed by his politically

ambidextrous chief strategist, Dick Morris. "I signed that bill because I trusted you," Clinton told Morris in the face of incoming liberal flak.

But like Trump, Clinton was a deal-maker at heart, and he couldn't resist the temptation to put some runs on the board, whatever the remonstrance of liberals in his own party. "Clinton and Newt Gingrich came to Washington to get stuff done, and even though they didn't like one another, they knew their job was to get things done," LaHood recalled. "Welfare, the balanced budget, tax reform – you name it, they got it done. That seems to be the chemistry with Trump at the moment."

It's far from unheard of for presidents to buck the congressional wings of their own parties to make a deal with the opposition on their own priorities. Lyndon Johnson ran roughshod over segregationist southern Democrats – and dismissed the worried pleas of some northern liberals – to make common cause with Midwestern Republicans on civil rights. Senator Everett Dirksen, the GOP leader of that era, often remarked that his only unshakable principle was flexibility – a maxim that Trump indisputably shares – and his son-in-law Howard Baker once said that "every idea he held, he held tentatively."

It is true that radical changes in demographics and party structure have made such across-the-aisle alliances much less likely – indeed, often impossible – today. But it seems equally possible that Trump actually likes Schumer, his fellow New Yorker, and has a grudging respect for Pelosi's partisan street-fighter's skills.

Whether the spirit of comity struck up over beef medallions at the White House will produce meaningful legislation is another question, of course. For now, there are plenty of skeptics.

"I think we can expect more abrupt changes, attacks on allies, and flirtations with adversaries but with little constructive follow-up," said

Brookings's Mann. "This dude is in the wrong job, and it's not as much fun as he thought it would be."

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The New York Times Trump's Support for Law to Protect 'Dreamers' Lifts Its Chances (UNE)

Sheryl Gay Stolberg and Yamiche Alcindor
9-12 minutes

Trump: 'We Are Working on a Plan for DACA'

President Trump said that he supported legislation that would protect young, undocumented immigrants from deportation and that the border wall "will come later."

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. Photo by Tom Brenner/The New York Times. Watch in Times Video »

WASHINGTON — An unexpected meeting of the minds between President Trump and Democratic leaders on Thursday made real a possible deal in Congress to pair enhanced border security with legislation to protect young, undocumented immigrants brought to the country as children.

One day after Mr. Trump hosted Senator Chuck Schumer and Representative Nancy Pelosi for dinner at the White House, the president said he could support legislation to protect the young immigrants known as "Dreamers" from deportation if it were accompanied by a "massive" border security upgrade. Aceding to a key Democratic demand, Mr. Trump said such a package did not need to have funding for a border wall.

It was the second time this month that a tentative agreement announced by Democrats left Republican leaders in Congress scrambling to adjust a legislative agenda that appears increasingly set by the party out of power in the House, the Senate and the White House.

"We're working on a plan for DACA," Mr. Trump told reporters, referring to protections for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, as he prepared to leave the White House for Florida. He added, "The wall will come later."

And Republican leaders at least sounded open to pursuing it.

"We're not going to bring a solution to the floor that does not have the support of President Trump," Speaker Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin told reporters. But if Mr. Trump does support an immigration package

that includes "security and enforcement," he said, so will "a majority of our members, because our members support President Trump."

But he also made his frustration clear. "The president understands he has to work with the congressional majorities to get any kind of legislative solution," Mr. Ryan said.

Mr. Trump's comments, at a time when Republicans had hoped to focus on rewriting the tax code, came amid a chaotic day of back and forth on Capitol Hill over what, precisely, had emerged from Wednesday's White House dinner — and where Mr. Trump's newfound alliance with Democrats might lead. On Thursday morning, the president telephoned Republican leaders to relay news of the dinner discussions; Republicans were left on the defensive, and seemingly flummoxed.

Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, issued a curt statement saying he and his colleagues "look forward to receiving the Trump administration's legislative proposal," while Mr. Ryan called Wednesday night's talks "a discussion, not an agreement or a negotiation."

Leaving the issue in Mr. Trump's hands could prove beneficial for Republicans, ridding them of a difficult job. A person familiar with the discussions said Mr. McConnell welcomed Mr. Trump being the Republicans' point man on immigration after the two presidents before him failed to come up with a plan and the party remained split on how to deal with the issue.

Audio

Listen to 'The Daily'

We talk with Glenn Thrush and Bernie Sanders about President Trump's latest dealmaking with Democratic leadership.

Some Republican lawmakers openly welcomed Washington's newly changed immigration landscape.

"I think President Trump has a chance to be on immigration what President Nixon was on China; he has a lot of credibility on the issue," said Senator Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee. "I think if the president recommended a solution to Congress and the

American people, they might very well accept it."

However, many Republican lawmakers fear that Mr. Trump, who has not had a background in crafting legislation, might end up signing legislation written by Democrats, which would infuriate many conservative voters. Some conservatives pushed back hard.

Representative Dave Brat, a Virginia Republican and member of the hard-line House Freedom Caucus, said a wall on the southern border was "what the whole election was about." He added that any bill that offers legal status to undocumented immigrants would send the wrong message.

"You say to the rest of the world, 'Hey, as long as you get into the U.S., the green light is on and eventually you are going to get to stay permanently,'" he said. "That will lead to a huge inflow."

Senator Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina Republican who has been a consistent advocate of legislation to overhaul the nation's immigration laws, cheered Mr. Trump on.

"The president is trying to cut a deal that I think would be good for the country as a whole."

As lawmakers discussed Mr. Trump's intentions, the House on Thursday actually passed a get-tough measure called the Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act, aimed at MS-13 and other immigrant gangs. Critics and immigration rights advocates said the measure would codify racial profiling.

Earlier this month, Mr. Trump announced he would phase out DACA, begun by President Barack Obama, but would give lawmakers six months to come up with something to replace it. The program benefits about 800,000 young immigrants, including those brought to the United States illegally as children, and others who have overstayed their visas.

But at this point, any legislative proposal on the so-called Dreamers may have to come from the minority party — a highly unusual situation in a Congress where Republicans control both legislative chambers, with a Republican in the White House.

In an interview Thursday, Mr. Schumer said he and Ms. Pelosi

arrived at Wednesday's dinner prepared with a specific list of border security items that Democrats could agree to, drawn from Mr. Trump's own budget request. They included sensors to beef up border monitoring, rebuilding roads along the border, drones and air support for border enforcement.

"I told the president that there's tremendous distrust in our caucuses, in our constituencies and in the public, and I mentioned a litany of things such as the Muslim ban and Charlottesville," Mr. Schumer said, referring to the president's travel ban on immigrants from six Muslim-majority nations, and to Mr. Trump's equivocal remarks about white supremacists after the violence in Charlottesville, Va.

"And I said for us to get something done we need to establish some trust," Mr. Schumer added. He said the next step will be for Democratic leadership aides to meet with White House counterparts to "sit down and figure out a border security package that we can all agree on." That would be paired with the so-called Dream Act, legislation dating back to 2001 that would shield young immigrants from deportation and offer a path to citizenship.

"We're all going to support the Dream Act and we're going to push for it to get on the floor soon," Mr. Schumer said. "That part is agreed to."

Republicans accused Mr. Schumer of moving the goal posts. DACA offered temporary legal status to young, undocumented immigrants, and allowed them to live and work without fear of deportation. But it was not as expansive as the Dream Act.

In Florida, Mr. Trump said flatly that any package would not offer a path to citizenship, and added that he intended to work with Republicans as well.

"No, we're not looking at citizenship," Mr. Trump said. "We're not looking at amnesty. We're looking at allowing people to stay here. We're working with everybody — Republican. We're working with Democrat. I just spoke with Paul Ryan, he's on board. Everybody is on board. They want to do something. We're not talking about amnesty. We're talking about — we're talking about taking care of

people, people that were brought here, people that have done a good job and were not brought here of their own volition."

In an unscripted moment on the Senate floor Thursday, Mr. Schumer was caught on a microphone sounding enthusiastic about the Democrats' new comity with Mr. Trump. "He likes us; he likes me anyway," the Democratic leader was overheard saying. He went on: "Here's what I told him, I said, 'Mr. President, you're much

better off if you sometimes step right and you sometimes step left. If you have to step just in one direction, you're boxed.' He gets that."

But while Mr. Schumer and Ms. Pelosi were reveling in their seemingly newfound clout, they faced misgivings from their left and from Hispanics, who worry that the fate of young immigrants is now paired with a push for increased border security.

"Why are we discussing border security?" asked Representative Luis V. Gutiérrez, Democrat of Illinois. "I thought we were discussing DACA. So already you see the slippery slope of the conversation."

He added, "I hope and pray that Pelosi and Schumer are more sophisticated and smarter than everyone else that's been duped by Donald Trump."

Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham, Democrat of New Mexico

and chairwoman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, said she along with the heads of the Congressional Black Caucus and Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus met with Mr. Schumer on Thursday afternoon to discuss the agreement.

Ms. Grisham said she would be in favor of a legislative fix that would split the issues of border security and the DACA beneficiaries into two separate bills.

The New York Times (UNE) Immigration's Sudden Re-Emergence Scrambles Republican Agenda

Jeremy W. Peters

8-10 minutes

Representative Steve King, an Iowa Republican who advocates a hard line on immigration, predicted that the president's base is "blown up, destroyed, irreparable." Pete Marovich for The New York Times

WASHINGTON — Republican leaders had muscled through their failure to repeal the Affordable Care Act, punted on the perennial brinkmanship over the debt ceiling and finally reached the one issue that all of the party's factions wanted to be on, tax reform.

Then, over a Chinese dinner at the White House with the two top Democrats on Capitol Hill, President Trump threw that momentary sense of satisfaction into disarray, forcing Republicans to confront the subject that packs more emotional and political force than anything they had on their busy agenda: immigration.

Virtually nothing can drive Republicans more bitterly apart than immigration policy, which has vexed the party ever since President Ronald Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Republican leaders were scorched by the issue when President George W. Bush pushed it in his second term. The divisions re-emerged when President Barack Obama took it back up.

And now it re-enters the political bloodstream just when the party was desperate to demonstrate its ability to deliver on other complicated issues before lawmakers face voters next year, like lowering corporate and individual tax rates and revitalizing the nation's infrastructure.

Mr. Trump's tentative agreement on Wednesday with Senator Chuck Schumer of New York and Representative Nancy Pelosi of

California to move forward on legislation to protect the legal status of young, undocumented immigrants and to delay, for now, a fight over the president's promised border wall triggered anger and bewilderment on the right.

From talk radio studios to the halls of the Capitol, conservatives across the ideological spectrum seemed caught off guard by the president's move, unsure what exactly he had agreed to, if anything at all.

"No one knows what the deal is," said Representative Mo Brooks, Republican of Alabama, who expressed wariness about the agreement and spared no one in his criticism. "I am frustrated with all of Washington, and I make no exception."

On Twitter, the conservative firebrand Ann Coulter was more blunt: "At this point, who DOESN'T want Trump impeached?" Breitbart News gave the president a belittling nickname of his own: Amnesty Don.

Mr. Trump insisted at the White House on Thursday, "We're not talking about amnesty at all," and he tried to reassure rattled supporters that there would still be a wall. "The wall will happen."

Still, he has put Republicans on an unpredictable path, compelled to take up immigration, not on their own terms but after the prodding of two Democratic leaders who are politically invested in their failure. If nothing else, no one seemed very interested in talking about tax policy on Thursday.

Mr. Trump's former chief strategist, Stephen K. Bannon, told "60 Minutes" this week that by spring "it will be a civil war inside the Republican Party" if Congress sets itself on a path toward approving new immigration legislation.

The president is testing that prophecy.

"No promise is credible," fumed Representative Steve King, Republican of Iowa and perhaps the leading proponent in Congress advocating the hard line on immigration that Mr. Trump has voiced. Mr. King tweeted, "Reagan led with Amnesty, 1986. Bush43 led with Amnesty '06, Obama led with Amnesty '13. All failed so...Trump leads with DACA Amnesty 2017."

The odd new alliance over DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, also threatened to scramble alignments within the already fractious Republican Party, suddenly giving the party's moderates the upper hand.

"The roles are reversed," said Travis Korson, a Republican strategist who has worked with conservative groups and lawmakers to forge a consensus on immigration.

Republicans who were wary of Mr. Trump's tough talk on immigration and his demand for a border wall, Mr. Korson said, are open to a deal that offers legalization for the so-called Dreamers in exchange for more border security.

At the same time, Mr. Korson added, "Republicans who backed Trump during the campaign, in part because of the wall, are the ones most likely to split with him over this deal."

"The question for them," he said, is whether the wall will "be a hill they're willing to die on."

Most Republicans had assumed the president considered the wall nonnegotiable.

No promise was more central to his campaign. And no constituency was more passionate in defending Mr. Trump than the conservatives who believed he would be uncompromising in his approach toward illegal immigration. Just last month, he was threatening to shut down the government if Congress

did not approve funding to start the wall's construction.

Laura Ingraham, the conservative radio host, at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland last year. Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

Mr. Trump's sudden embrace of politicians whom Republicans have spent years vilifying — especially Ms. Pelosi, whom Republicans have made into an avatar for the liberal, coastal elite — also sowed confusion. How could the party, some wondered, continue to persuasively demonize Democrats if their president is going behind their back to reach compromises with them?

"Republicans have spent so much time and money targeting Nancy Pelosi as the enemy over the last few cycles, the idea that you're now going to do a deal with her has to rub people the wrong way," said Russ Schriefer, a Republican consultant who has worked for George W. Bush and Mitt Romney. "Doesn't it hurt all these Republican congressmen who want to use her as the liberal foil in their campaigns?"

The risks could be greater than a messaging issue. Many Republicans worry about the impact that disillusioned Trump supporters will have if many of them have concluded by next year's elections that the president sold them out. If those voters stay home, that could cost Republicans their majorities in Congress.

Amid all the political controversy, legal peril and everyday disarray inside the Trump White House, Republicans whose fates are linked to the president's have wondered how much more his base would tolerate. The president once boasted that he could "stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody" and still not lose voters. With this immigration deal, he may

finally have an answer to that proposition.

"I always figured Trump would go Schwarzenegger on us," one caller into Hugh Hewitt's conservative talk radio program said on Thursday, invoking the former California governor, who many conservatives believed sold them out.

Some listeners said Mr. Trump had confirmed what they suspected all along about the insincerity of his

conservative convictions. Others said the president, a self-proclaimed master negotiator, had been rolled by the Democrats. The comments mostly added up to a damning conclusion: Mr. Trump had tricked his voters.

"The No. 1 reason I voted for him was for the immigration," said a caller into Laura Ingraham's show. "I want the wall. I want it to be seen in space, like the Chinese wall."

Ms. Ingraham, who has until now been sparing in her criticism of the president, told her listeners on Thursday that the political cost to Mr. Trump and the Republican Party would be steep.

"He's going to get creamed for this," she said, reminding her audience of all the times during the campaign that Mr. Trump chanted — and his crowds repeated — "build the wall!" (Not since George Bush's "Read my

lips, no new taxes" pledge has one phrase been so synonymous with a campaign pledge.)

"I don't remember hearing 'Repair the fence! Repair the fence! Repair the fence!'" Ms. Ingraham added, mocking Mr. Trump's attempt to defend himself by noting that parts of the current border fence were being repaired and reinforced under his direction.



Trump's immigration talks with Democrats attract cautious support

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

10-13 minutes

President Trump's effort to strike an immigration deal with Democrats attracted cautious support from lawmakers of both parties Thursday even as it prompted a swift backlash from scattered conservatives and an attempt by irritated Republican leaders to reassert their authority.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) dismissed the potential deal negotiated late Wednesday over dinner at the White House between Trump and Capitol Hill's top two Democrats as little more than a preliminary discussion — and insisted that any agreement must have buy-in from GOP leaders.

Yet Ryan agreed in broad terms with the president's goal of protecting hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants while postponing talk of a border wall but toughening U.S. border security in other ways.

"If we have the support of President Trump on the kinds of things I just said, getting security and enforcement along with the solution here [for 'dreamers'], that I believe will get a majority of our members, because our members support President Trump," he said.

Ryan and his Senate counterpart, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), have been in limbo since Trump turned to Democrats last week, brokering a deal to raise the debt ceiling and fund the government — and effectively forcing GOP leaders to the sidelines.

President Trump insisted on Sept. 14 that his plans to pursue legislative protections for dreamers will not include "amnesty" and said that any deal must ensure no "obstruction" of his promised border wall. President Trump insisted on Sept. 14 that his plans to pursue legislative protections for dreamers

will not include "amnesty." (The Washington Post)

President Trump insisted on Sept. 14 that his plans to pursue legislative protections for dreamers will not include "amnesty" and said that any deal must ensure no "obstruction" of his promised border wall. (The Washington Post)

Their uncomfortable position was obvious Thursday, when Ryan confirmed that he didn't learn of the potential deal with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) until Thursday morning, when Trump and White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly confirmed it in phone conversations from Air Force One more than 12 hours after the dinner meeting.

Ryan stated that any discussion of a "Dream Act" to protect undocumented immigrants brought into the country as children must originate with House Republicans. "There is no agreement," he said at a news conference on Capitol Hill.

"The president understands he has to work with the congressional majorities to get any kind of legislative solution," he added.

McConnell remained noncommittal about a possible deal — and put the onus on the White House to come up with a proposal.

"We look forward to receiving the Trump administration's legislative proposal as we continue our work on these issues," he said in a statement.

Despite these comments, many rank-and-file Republicans indicated that they are open to whatever the president supports, particularly if it includes stronger border controls and interior enforcement.

"I know there's a hue and cry from around the country as relates to what happened last night — I'm sorry," said Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.). "I've been here 10 years and eight months now, there's been way, way too much gridlock here, and if the president can sit down with leaders of the other party and

bring consensus on an issue like he did last night, I'm all for it."

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) spoke on Sept. 14 about President Trump's discussion with Democrats on DACA and border security. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) spoke on Sept. 14 about President Trump's discussion with Democrats on DACA and border security. (Reuters)

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) spoke on Sept. 14 about President Trump's discussion with Democrats on DACA and border security. (Reuters)

Yet Trump's unpredictability remained a constant throughout the day, as he repeatedly stated that he wasn't considering allowing dreamers — undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children — to become citizens. This stance put him at odds with Schumer and Pelosi, who believed he supported the idea.

"We're not looking at citizenship," Trump told reporters on an airport tarmac in Florida, where he toured relief efforts following Hurricane Irma. "We're not looking at amnesty. We're looking at allowing people to stay here. . . . We're talking about taking care of people, people who were brought here, people who've done a good job."

[A new strategy' for Trump? Democrats cautious but encouraged by fresh outreach.]

Schumer said that was not his understanding from the White House dinner the previous evening.

"There was no debate about that. We discussed the ramifications of the bill and there was no dissent, no 'oh, we can't support this part or that part.' That hasn't changed. No one has said that won't happen," Schumer said.

A path to citizenship could complicate the debate for many Republicans, said Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), chairman of the conservative House Freedom Caucus. But most GOP members seemed to adopt a wait-and-see

attitude as the White House hammered out its plan.

Some Democrats expressed concern about trusting Trump. Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.) spoke for many Democrats when he urged leaders to proceed with caution.

"I've no idea how Donald Trump's brain works. All I know is, he's caused a lot of concern and anxiety among 800,000 people, and we've got to find a way to fix this," McGovern said. "I know where his heart is, and it's not where mine is. So we're all a little bit skeptical because of who he is. When it comes to immigrants, he's not a very nice person."

Schumer and Pelosi, however, appeared encouraged by their new position of influence at a time when Republicans control the White House and both houses of Congress.

On Thursday morning, an energetic Schumer was caught on a hot mic on the Senate floor reflecting on the previous night's dinner.

"He likes us," Schumer appeared to say about the president. "He likes me, anyway. . . . Here's what I told him: 'Mr. President, you're much better off if you do one step right, and one step left. If you just step in one direction, you're boxed.' He gets that."

Schumer said that Democrats should trust that in this case Trump is negotiating in good faith.

"He said he would do this and I take him at his word that he will," the senator said, adding later: "We thought we had an opportunity to get something good and let's see what happens. We're very hopeful that they will keep their word."

Specific talks on border security are expected to begin in the coming days, Schumer said. He and Pelosi said border security measures in the final agreement could include drones, sensor technology, road repairs and other strategies that were included in a bipartisan bill in 2013 that instructed federal officials to draft a plan ensuring

apprehension of 90 percent of all illegal border-crossers within five years.

Some Republicans want tougher immigration enforcement and mandatory use of the E-Verify employment eligibility system as part of a final deal.

But even immigration hard-liners such as Rep. Lou Barletta (R-Pa.) seemed open to hearing what the White House comes up with.

"We want to have compassion for these children. At the same time, the American people need to be brought into this too. What will they get?" Barletta asked.

He said he's not disappointed in Trump. "He's kept his promises on the campaign trail. I have no reason to believe he's not going to," Barletta said.

[Is Trump advocating 'amnesty'? Ask one conservative lawmaker, and watch him squirm.]

Hard-line conservatives had initially reacted to Trump's agreement with shock and outrage.

Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) tweeted Wednesday night that the deal

would ensure that Trump's base is "blown up, destroyed, irreparable, and disillusioned beyond repair."

King elaborated Thursday. "He hasn't had enough voices reminding him of his campaign promises, and I want to remind him," King said, acknowledging that "it's harder to resist the president of your own party."

Trump said Thursday that he would agree to a deal only if it includes "extreme security."

"We want to get massive border security. And I think that both Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, I think they agree with it," Trump said on the Florida tarmac. "Look, 92 percent of the people agree on DACA, but what we want is very, very powerful border security, okay?"

No matter where the negotiations go in the coming weeks, they will not include serious consideration of a GOP plan to limit legal immigration.

The Raise Act, proposed by Sens. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) and David Perdue (R-Ga.), would halve legal immigration levels over the next

decade and cap annual refugee admissions at 50,000.

While the bill is popular with Trump's most ardent supporters and conservative lawmakers, it is widely opposed by Democrats and many Republicans, who see it as potentially harmful to the economy and a break with decades of American tradition.

Trump supports the measure, but he agreed Wednesday not to include it as part of any Dream Act agreement, according to multiple people familiar with the meeting who asked for anonymity to speak candidly about it.

Regardless, the path ahead could be perilous for Democrats.

Rep. Raúl Grijalva, vice chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, said he worries that the White House is sending mixed messages about Trump's true intentions on immigration. The discussion of border security appears to be drifting away, Grijalva said, from investing in new border-monitoring technology and toward more aggressive enforcement tactics.

The Arizona Democrat said many members are worried that pairing border security with protections for immigrants in a single bill could put Democrats in the difficult position of deciding whether to vote for a Dream Act that includes security measures they oppose.

The Daily 202 newsletter

PowerPost's must-read morning briefing for decision-makers.

"I really believe that every one of us is going to face a crucible where there is going to be something in the security package that we have opposed," Grijalva said.

In the House, these concerns led members of the minority to discuss working with GOP leaders to allow separate votes on proposals to protect young immigrants and bolster border security.

But those familiar with the idea, who asked for anonymity to speak frankly about the talks, stressed that it is in the preliminary stages and may ultimately not be feasible.

Paul Kane, Kelsey Snell and Amber Phillips contributed to this report.



'Amnesty Don'? Trump tests the faith of supporters with talk of immigration deal (UNE)

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

9-12 minutes

With chants of "build the wall," warnings of rapists coming from Mexico and an unforgiving promise to deport millions, Donald Trump forged a fundamental bond with millions of frustrated Americans who helped him take over the Republican Party and win the White House.

But now the same issue of immigration is straining Trump's ties to hard-line conservatives. Trump's agreement this week with Democratic leaders on a more moderate approach to immigration legislation has sparked bitter talk of betrayal among some of his staunchest defenders on the right — and forced many of them to rethink their loyalties amid confusion over what the president favors.

When Trump on Thursday signaled his embrace of granting legal status to some immigrants who were brought to the United States illegally by their parents, he prompted new questions about whether he would support an eventual path to citizenship for them and raised doubts about how hard he would

fight Democrats for the massive wall he promised along the U.S.-Mexico border.

In the eyes of these admirers-turned-critics, Trump's sins include not just a refusal to issue an ultimatum on the wall but his newfound willingness to work with the detested establishments of the Republican and Democratic parties. While party leaders on both sides frame the issue of undocumented childhood immigrants in compassionate terms, others view any accommodation as an affront to U.S. sovereignty and the rule of law.

"If we're not getting a wall, I'd prefer President Pence," conservative author Ann Coulter tweeted Thursday.

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)

"Amnesty Don," declared a bright-red headline on Breitbart News, the website run by former White House

chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon — one of many political fire alarms set off by die-hard supporters following the sudden breakthrough Wednesday at a White House dinner.

[Conservatives unleash anger over Trump's willingness to pursue deal]

Yet the lasting political cost of Trump's engagement with top Democrats on immigration remained ambiguous. While Coulter and others vented, several conservative leaders Thursday remained hesitant about breaking with the president publicly given his continued grass-roots support and their desire to focus Republican ire on the leadership in Congress.

"The jury is still out on whether the base starts to leave him. And I'm not sure what the truth is," Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) said in an interview. "If this stands and we end up with amnesty, the base that was pulled together because of immigration will start to peel off in significant ways."

But, King added, "No one is quite sure about how this will play out and whether it's truly what we worry it'll be."

Trump has cultivated a political persona defined, in part, by his hard-line policy positions but also by

the way he speaks as a celebrity populist to the grievances of many Americans amid a fast-changing global economy and culture.

In search of a bipartisan victory that has eluded him, Trump has at times attempted to redefine those promises — to build a "big, beautiful" concrete wall, to deport all undocumented immigrants he has said "have to go." The thought is that his base on Capitol Hill and in the activist ranks will forgive him because he shares those deeper grievances and anxieties, even if he is an unreliable champion.

President Trump spoke to reporters on Sept. 14 about his deal with Democrats on DACA and immigration reform, saying "we're moving very rapidly on the wall." President Trump spoke to reporters on Sept. 14 about his deal with Democrats on DACA and immigration reform, saying "we're moving very rapidly on the wall." (The Washington Post)

President Trump spoke to reporters on Sept. 14 about his deal with Democrats on DACA and immigration reform, saying "we're moving very rapidly on the wall." (The Washington Post)

The president's statements seemed to evolve by the hour Thursday,

reiterating that he would work with Democrats on shielding the thousands of “dreamers” who rely on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, while also assuring angry conservatives that the border wall remains “very important,” even if separate from the latest pact.

In another tweet, he suggested that the wall he had promised “is already under construction in the form of new renovation of old and existing fences and walls.” Hours later, he said that plans for funding the wall, which he once described as a concrete edifice, were yet to come. “The wall will come later,” Trump told reporters.

Then in an email message to supporters signed by Trump, Trump’s political committee told supporters: “There’s been a lot of noise today... Let me set the record straight in the simplest language possible: WE WILL BUILD A WALL (NOT A FENCE).”

[The Fix: Trump is finding that campaigning to erase Obama’s legacy is easier than actually doing so]

Polling suggests that Trump has more room to maneuver with his base on the question of dreamers than on other planks of his immigration platform. An analysis of the 2016 presidential election by Hamilton College political scientist Philip Klinkner found that among 2016 Trump voters, 67 percent supported building a southern border wall, 80 percent said speaking English was “very important” to being American, and 80 percent were opposed to letting Syrian refugees into the United States.

But among the same voters, 68 percent said child migrants brought illegally who have been here 10 years and have graduated high school should be allowed to stay in the country.

“That’s what the White House is wrestling with right now,” says Jim McLaughlin, a campaign pollster for Trump who still consults with the White House.

Trump waffled during the campaign over how he would handle the dreamers. In the summer of 2015, he said on CNN that he would deal with the group “with big heart.” Then he changed tack weeks later, telling NBC News of those same migrants, “We are going to keep the families together, but they have to go.”

Behind the scenes of the campaign, Trump spoke often of the possibility of dealing with childhood arrivals with a gentler hand, according to several former Trump campaign advisers.

[‘Trump betrays everyone’: The president has a long record as an unpredictable ally]

California-based pastor Samuel Rodriguez, who led a prayer at Trump’s inauguration, said he spoke repeatedly with Trump during the campaign about the dreamers issue.

“His commentary and his commitment to building the wall and stopping illegal immigration was very rigid and very fixed,” said Rodriguez, who serves as the president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. “The moment I brought up dreamers, everything shifted. In fact, at one point he brought up the

fact that he was a father and a grandfather.”

After the election, Trump began to signal publicly that he planned to “work something out” about young undocumented immigrants. “They got brought here at a very young age, they’ve worked here and they’ve gone to school here,” he said weeks after the election.

Longtime Trump watchers said they understood Trump’s eagerness to convince his core voters Thursday that he remains with them on their animating issue, but warned that he may have gone too far for many of them.

“The base is revolting. The reality is sinking in that the Trump administration is on the precipice of turning into an establishment presidency,” said Sam Nunberg, a former Trump campaign aide.

Days earlier, Bannon said on CBS’s “60 Minutes” that he was “worried about losing the House now because of this, because of DACA,” arguing that Republican voters would lack enthusiasm for Trump and the party if they felt it was drifting to the center on immigration.

“If this goes all the way down to its logical conclusion, in February and March it will be a civil war inside the Republican Party that will be every bit as vitriolic as 2013,” Bannon said, referring to the stalled fight that year over a comprehensive immigration bill.

Conservative radio talk show host Laura Ingraham, who is friendly with Trump, mocked the president after news trickled out about a potential immigration deal.

[Is Trump advocating amnesty? Ask one conservative lawmaker and watch him squirm.]

“Exactly what @realDonaldTrump campaigned on. Not,” Ingraham wrote on Twitter. She later added, “BUILD THE WALL! BUILD THE WALL! ... or ... maybe ... not really.”

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But other Trump-supporting conservatives, such as conservative broadcasters Rush Limbaugh and Fox News’s Sean Hannity, stuck by him, directing their irritation at the media and at congressional Republicans rather than at Trump.

“They want you to think Trump has sold you out,” Limbaugh said on his program. “They want you to think that Trump has given away his mandate in exchange for doing deals... He’s been frustrated because the Republicans won’t do anything, so he’s going over to the Democrat side, and he’s doing deals.”

Hannity echoed him.

“Well Mitch GREAT JOB!” Hannity tweeted, referring to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). “You failed so miserably with Healthcare and ‘excessive expectations’ now @POTUS has to deal with Dem Leaders!”

Hannity added later, “I blame R’s. They caused this. They wanted him to fail and now pushed him into arms of political suicide — IF TRUE.”



Editorial : Trump’s Dreamer Dealing

The Editorial Board

4 minutes

Sept. 14, 2017 7:24 p.m. ET

Anything can happen with Donald Trump, and it usually does, as some of his ardent followers are discovering to their shock as the President negotiates with Democratic leaders on immigration. Mr. Trump has been known to change his mind, and in this case that’s for the good as his bipartisan dealing to legalize young adult immigrants brought here as children is in the best interests of the country and his Presidency.

“Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who

have jobs, some serving in the military? Really!” Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter Thursday morning. That excellent rhetorical question followed his dinner Wednesday night with Democratic leaders Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, who announced afterward that they had a deal with Mr. Trump to legalize the Dreamers, as the young adults are known.

Mr. Trump has been less definitive, saying Thursday morning in Washington that he and the two Democrats were “fairly close” to an agreement that would also include “massive border security.” He said his wall at the Mexican border “will come later,” though later in Florida he said “we’ll only do it if we get extreme security, not only surveillance but everything that goes with surveillance. If there’s not a wall, we’re doing nothing.”

Who knows how this will turn out, but we hope Mr. Trump cuts that deal with the Democrats with few security strings attached. The benefits would be many.

Congress would codify in law a policy that Barack Obama imposed illegally by executive fiat. Mr. Trump would solve the most politically emotive immigration problem, which is the fate of these young adults who committed no crime in coming here. Some 700,000 people could keep contributing to American society without fear of deportation.

Mr. Trump would also notch a political success on immigration that eluded George W. Bush and Mr. Obama. He would show, as he promised in the campaign, that he can get things done. Not a bad day’s work.

As for the shouts of “betrayal” from Mr. Trump’s restrictionist fans, we hope someone has confiscated the sharp objects at the Breitbart townhouse. But what did they expect?

Their desire to deport the Dreamers to countries they left as children is a minority view in the United States, the Republican Party and even among conservatives. Mr. Trump adopted his anti-immigration positions during the campaign to win the GOP primary, not because they are lifelong beliefs. Mr. Trump’s core political conviction is winning, and the Dreamer deal will be popular.

Our guess is the Trumpians in the media will soon find a way to blame everyone else—especially the GOP “establishment”—for the President’s switcheroo. This is their political and

commercial business model. They'll be back cheering Mr. Trump soon enough. So go

ahead and cut that deal, Mr. President, and include a path to citizenship too. After Neil Gorsuch's

nomination and deregulation, it would be the biggest achievement of your Presidency.

Appeared in the September 15, 2017, print edition.

**NATIONAL
REVIEW
ONLINE**

Editorial : Trump & Schumer & Pelosi – Immigration DACA Deal Mistake

3-4 minutes

President Trump had dinner Wednesday night with Chuck and Nancy, as he familiarly calls the Democratic leaders he apparently hopes will become his new governing partners.

Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi left the repast and promptly announced that they had reached a deal with the president over codifying DACA. According to the Democrats, they had agreed with the president to seek legislation that would provide amnesty for illegal immigrants once covered under DACA in exchange for unspecified border-security measures, but not funding for "the wall." Trump denied there was actually a deal, but confirmed the basic structure of a prospective agreement. According to Trump, DACA

will be reinstated in exchange for "massive" and "extreme" new border security, but not funding for the wall.

Who knows what will ultimately come of this, but it's not encouraging. Since announcing the end of DACA, Trump has signaled that merely writing its provisions in legislation would constitute a triumph. But the point of rescinding DACA was not just to enshrine it into law via constitutional means (which is certainly better than the alternative). The point was also to extract concessions from Democrats that would create a better immigration system and cushion the effect of the amnesty. Almost from the beginning, Trump has undermined his own leverage and made this less likely.

As we've argued repeatedly, a sensible deal isn't hard to discern.

The problem with any amnesty is that it serves as a magnet for new illegal immigrants, and its recipients could become the next link in chain migration if granted legal status or especially citizenship. Pairing an amnesty for so-called Dreamers with some combination of a mandatory E-Verify for new hires and portions of the RAISE Act that will reduce chain migration would directly address the negative consequences of codifying a version of DACA.

The legislation that Trump, Schumer, and Pelosi are talking about would likely do neither. Trump wouldn't even get funding for his signature border wall. (The wall is largely symbolism, and a trade of a permanent amnesty for some one-time funding for the wall would be a bad deal.) The parameters of this agreement appear to be about what you would expect from a negotiation

between Schumer and Pelosi on one hand and Trump on the other. The Democrats are opposed to any meaningful tightening of the immigration system — they want to go in the opposite direction — while Trump has been a restrictionist, although one not well-versed in the policy implications of that position, to put it mildly.

We hope that the White House realizes what a mistake this deal would be, and failing that, that the Republican congressional leadership, with a push from immigration hawks, puts the kibosh on it and demands something better. Whatever Trump might think, Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi aren't his friends, and certainly aren't the friends of sound immigration policy.



Editorial : Trump's art of the deal for dreamers

The Editorial Board, USA TODAY

4-5 minutes

Debt ceiling and now DACA. Do we dare hope Don, Chuck and Nancy will continue beautiful working friendship?: Our view

From left, President Trump, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi(Photo: Evan Vucci, AP)

After seven months of catering to the Republican base, President Trump has started cutting deals with Democrats through his new pals, Sen. Charles Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, or as he calls them, "Chuck and Nancy."

The two Democratic leaders reached an agreement with Trump on the debt ceiling and hurricane relief last week. Now they appear close to a deal on the so-called DACA program, which protects from deportation nearly 800,000 immigrants brought illegally to America as kids.

It is not certain the arrangement discussed at the White House on Wednesday night will hold up. Already, it has sparked a fierce

backlash from conservatives, as well as opposition from the far left, where anything other than resistance to Trump is considered treasonous. But assuming a deal gets done, it will provide something for both sides.

STEVE DEACE: Was Trump's compassion for working families 'fake news'?

Trump and fellow Republicans would get more border-security money (though no wall) and escape from the corner they have put themselves in by threatening to deport U.S.-educated, well-integrated residents who have the overwhelming support of Americans.

Democrats would see a practical and merciful Obama-era policy codified into law, despite the Trump administration's recent moves to rescind the DACA program. Most important, the "dreamers" would no longer have to worry about being exiled to countries that they might have few connections to.

The deal has wider implications as well; namely, if Democrats and Republicans can agree on DACA, they can do so on other matters. These sorts of bipartisan compromises represent how Washington is supposed to work but too rarely does.

Several important issues have been bottled up by partisan politics, though they have widespread popular support, and possibly even majorities within Congress willing to back them.

The most obvious is a simplification of America's unwieldy tax code. A plan could advance now if both parties were to gang up on the special interests.

Improving and expanding America's crumbling infrastructure is another area ripe for a deal, and perhaps should have been Trump's first order of business after taking office. States have been able to fund road and transit improvements with higher taxes, often on gasoline. But at the federal level, Congress refuses even to adjust the 18.4-cent-a-gallon tax for inflation, thanks to purity enforcement groups that have gotten members to forswear any and all tax hikes.

The most intriguing idea for compromise is a comprehensive reform of the immigration system that goes well beyond DACA. In 2013, the Senate passed such a measure with a bipartisan supermajority. The measure, which would have blended enhanced enforcement with a path to legality for millions of undocumented workers, would have passed the House as well, but for a

strident minority that kept it from coming to a vote.

Why Trump, who rode anti-immigrant rhetoric to the White House, is suddenly cutting deals is anyone's guess. The best is that it is a natural outgrowth of his failures in trying to legislate strictly along party lines by working with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan. Also in question is how far Trump can go in bucking the GOP's base, and how far Schumer and Pelosi can go with Democrats.

But Don and Chuck and Nancy and Mitch and Paul have the opportunity to open some doors that have been shut for a long time. It is time to go through them.

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Steve Deace: Issue with DACA is not deportation

Steve Deace Published 6:25 p.m.
ET Sept. 14, 2017

3 minutes

**Seems Donald Trump's
compassion for working families
was 'fake news': Opposing view**

GOP nominee Donald Trump campaigns in Raleigh, N.C., Nov. 7, 2016.(Photo: Chip Somodevilla, Getty Images)

First, let's make clear what the issue actually is and is not.

The issue on the Obama program known as DACA is *not* deportation. That is a distraction from the real issue. Almost no one advocates deporting people who have roots here now and are contributing members of society. And every time we debate this

political non-starter, we distract from the real reason that passions run so high on this issue.

The real issue is compassion.

OUR VIEW: Trump's art of the deal for dreamers

See, millions of Americans believe their government no longer represents their interests. They're happy to see people escape poverty, come here and get educated and employed like their ancestors did. However, at the same time they've seen lots of their jobs shipped overseas and their wages stagnant for more than 20 years.

What they want to know is, where is the compassion for them?

A recent survey found that the average employed DACA recipient makes about \$36,000 a year. Yet

recent data from the Social Security Administration found that 51% of working Americans make less than that. Where is the compassion for them?

How many of you reading this would like to be making \$36,000 a year, or have your kids in a university receiving a quality education? You pay taxes. You obey the law. You're financing all this "compassion." So where is the compassion for you?

Your health care costs are climbing. You can't afford college for your kids. You're living paycheck-to-paycheck. Maybe you work in an industry known for hiring illegals, so you're in constant threat of your job disappearing.

Wouldn't you like some of that compassion for a change?

Not to mention, where's the compassion for the millions waiting in line to come here legally, doing things the right way?

President Trump claimed to understand these concerns on the campaign trail, earning the votes of millions of working Americans to shock the pundits and win the election. But now it appears that his compassion for working families was "fake news."

Steve Deace is a nationally syndicated host with CRTV and a columnist for Conservative Review.

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11-14 minutes

The Post's View

Opinion

Opinion A column or article in the Opinions section (in print, this is known as the Editorial Pages). President Trump in the Oval Office of the White House with Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.). (Evan Vucci/Associated Press)

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 14 at 7:08 PM

THIS PAGE doesn't often agree with President Trump, but we're on board with his observation that most Americans oppose deportation for "dreamers" — young undocumented immigrants, mainly in their teens

and 20s, in most cases brought to the United States as children by their parents. That view, reinforced by polling and apparently the president's own convictions, seems to be the driving force behind a deal he looks prepared to make with Democrats to extend protections to the dreamers in return for beefed-up border security.

The president's evident willingness to stand up for the dreamers, a reversal of his campaign rhetoric, has rendered parts of his right-wing base apoplectic, not least because it emerged from a dinner with the Democratic congressional leaders, Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (N.Y.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.). In fact, plenty of hard-line Republicans would gladly see the dreamers expelled from the country. Whatever bargain the president may ultimately strike, their die-hard opposition remains a formidable obstacle to overcome.

At the same time, Mr. Trump's stance, if he sticks to it, could swing enough moderate Republicans' votes in Congress to give dreamers a fighting chance at securing permanent protection from

deportation and perhaps some form of legal status (though he ruled out citizenship). That would settle a festering sore in American politics and hand the president a landmark bipartisan victory on an issue that has proved impervious to resolution since the turn of the century. Most importantly, it would enable about 690,000 dreamers, American in all but the legal sense, to get on with leading productive, fulfilling lives absent the threat of harassment and removal.

Evening Edition newsletter

The day's most important stories.

Mr. Trump was wrong to announce that he was rescinding Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the Obama-era program that shielded dreamers from deportation for renewable two-year periods. But now that he has thrown their fate to Capitol Hill, he's right to ratchet up the pressure on Congress to extend those immigrants the protections he is set to withdraw. Democrats should reciprocate in good faith by providing new funding for border security — even though its necessity is arguable given that illegal crossings have fallen for

years and plummeted since Mr. Trump assumed office.

While Democrats remain irreconcilably opposed to Mr. Trump's monumental border wall — rightly so, since it would be a mind-boggling waste of money — they should oblige if the president wants funding and credit for spiffed-up border technology along the frontier with Mexico and previously planned upgrades to the hundreds of miles of border fencing already in place. This is a finessable issue.

Some Republicans are likely to do their best to subvert any emerging deal, whether by attaching poison-pill measures to slash overall levels of legal immigration and refugee admittances or by intensifying roundups and surveillance of law-abiding illegal immigrants who have been living in the United States for many years.

By doing so, they would answer, to their own detriment, the question Mr. Trump posed on Twitter Thursday morning: "Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military? Really!"



6-7 minutes

People protest and welcome arriving passengers at Washington Dulles International Airport. (Astrid Riecken/For The Washington Post)

By Michael Chertoff September 14 at 8:04 PM

Chertoff : Cutting refugee admissions hurts Americans. Here's how.

By Michael Chertoff

Michael Chertoff, U.S. homeland security secretary from 2005 to 2009, is executive chairman of the Chertoff Group, a security and risk-management advisory firm.

President Trump will make another decision this month that will affect thousands of people: How many refugees will the United States admit in fiscal year 2018?

The president already cut refugee admissions by more than half this year, from more than 100,000 down to 50,000. By way of comparison, the highest ceiling under President Ronald Reagan was 140,000. The president has also signaled, through his executive orders and in his budget proposal, that these cuts will carry over to next year. And in fact, some in his administration are trying to convince him to cut even further.

This would be a mistake. Cutting refugee admittances would not only be a moral failure but also damage our national interest abroad and our economy.

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Of course, security is an imperative, and the refugee resettlement

program is secure. U.S. security and intelligence agencies conduct multiple reviews on every refugee admitted, and only those approved for admission by the Department of Homeland Security are granted refuge in the United States.

There is also the humanitarian imperative: We are in the midst of the greatest refugee crisis on record, with more than 22 million people seeking safety from violence, conflict and persecution all over the world. The vast majority of refugees — nearly 90 percent — are hosted by poor and middle-income countries. Only the most vulnerable — those whose safety cannot be assured in their countries of first refuge — are selected for resettlement. For these refugees — widowed women; orphaned children; survivors of rape, torture and brutal religious persecution — refugee resettlement is a lifeline.

But what's in it for the United States?

Strategic allies located near crises host the largest refugee populations in the world. Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan and Kenya are among the top refugee-hosting states. Their willingness to host millions of refugees contributes greatly to regional stability and security, all in regions where U.S. troops are deployed. As our

military works to contain terrorist insurgencies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and the Horn of Africa, forcing refugees to return to unsafe and unstable countries would make countering terrorism more difficult.

That's why in 2016, when the Kenyan government threatened to close the Dadaab refugee camp and forcibly return more than 250,000 Somalis to an unstable Somalia, then-Secretary of State John F. Kerry got on a plane to Kenya. It's also why the United States should be concerned that more than 700,000 Afghan registered and unregistered refugees have been returned to Afghanistan since 2016 — a threefold increase from 2015 — at a time when growing instability in Afghanistan and terrorist gains are forcing an increase in U.S. troop levels.

If we're not willing to do our fair share, how can we ask front-line allies to do more?

Maintaining resettlement commitments is also critical to our military, diplomatic and intelligence operations abroad. Tens of thousands of Iraqi and Afghan nationals have put their lives on the line to support intelligence-gathering, operations planning and other essential services. Terrorist groups openly target these

individuals because of their cooperation with Americans. Resettlement is instrumental to ensuring their safety — a testament to the U.S. military's commitment to leave no one behind on the battlefield.

And in a proud American tradition, Republican and Democratic presidents have used refugee admissions to signal support for those who reject ideologies antithetical to U.S. values. In the past few decades, we have raised our admissions ceilings to take in those fleeing communist uprisings, religious persecution and tyranny.

Today, the United States must provide unwavering support for Muslims who put their lives at risk to reject terrorist ideologies, many of whom refused to join or be conscripted into terrorist groups, militias and state security forces persecuting their fellow citizens. The Islamic State considers all those who flee its rule as heretics subject to execution. Those who risk their lives — and their children's lives — to reject terrorism must know, as a matter of our fight against extremism, that the United States supports and welcomes them.

Even in the wake of 9/11, the worst terrorist attack in our country's history, President George W. Bush

deliberately and explicitly maintained a refugee admissions ceiling of 70,000 annually, affirming the United States' great humanitarian tradition.

Finally, refugees enrich and are deeply supported by our communities. Hundreds of mayors, faith leaders and business leaders have attested to the contributions refugees make. Thousands of Americans donate volunteer hours, in-kind goods and services, and private dollars to support refugees. One study estimates only 39 percent of the costs of resettlement are covered by federal dollars.

Despite being among the most vulnerable and destitute when they arrive, refugees thrive. Entrepreneurship among refugees is nearly 50 percent higher than among U.S.-born populations, creating jobs for Americans. More than 57 percent of them are homeowners.

Our values and our national security interests argue for raising our refugee ceiling, not lowering it. The president should seize the mantle of Reagan and fortify U.S. leadership on refugees.

[Read These Comments](#)



Trump Humiliated Jeff Sessions After Mueller Appointment (UNE)

Michael S. Schmidt and

Maggie Haberman

9-12 minutes

President Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions in the Oval Office in February. Doug Mills/The New York Times

WASHINGTON — Shortly after learning in May that a special counsel had been appointed to investigate links between his campaign associates and Russia, President Trump berated Attorney General Jeff Sessions in an Oval Office meeting and said he should resign, according to current and former administration officials and others briefed on the matter.

The president attributed the appointment of the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, to Mr. Sessions's decision to recuse himself from the Justice Department's Russia investigation — a move Mr. Trump believes was the moment his administration effectively lost control over the inquiry. Accusing Mr. Sessions of "disloyalty," Mr. Trump unleashed a

string of insults on his attorney general.

Ashen and emotional, Mr. Sessions told the president he would quit and sent a resignation letter to the White House, according to four people who were told details of the meeting. Mr. Sessions would later tell associates that the demeaning way the president addressed him was the most humiliating experience in decades of public life.

The Oval Office meeting, details of which have not previously been reported, shows the intensity of Mr. Trump's emotions as the Russia investigation gained steam and how he appeared to immediately see Mr. Mueller's appointment as a looming problem for his administration. It also illustrates the depth of antipathy Mr. Trump has had for Mr. Sessions — one of his earliest campaign supporters — and how the president interprets "disloyalty" within his circle of advisers.

Mr. Trump ended up rejecting Mr. Sessions's May resignation letter after senior members of his administration argued that dismissing the attorney general would only create more problems for a president who had already fired an F.B.I. director and a

national security adviser. Mr. Trump once again, in July, told aides he wanted to remove Mr. Sessions, but for a second time didn't take action.

The relationship between the two men has improved marginally since midsummer, as Mr. Sessions has made a public display of hunting for the leakers among the administration's national security officials. His allies said that despite the humiliation, the attorney general has stayed in the job because he sees a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity as the nation's top law enforcement official to toughen the country's immigration policies.

But he may be losing that battle as well. Mr. Sessions played a prominent role announcing the end of the Obama-era program that provided protection to the children of undocumented immigrants, only to see his boss backtrack on the policy. On Thursday morning, Mr. Trump confirmed he had reached a deal with Democrats to provide protections for the so-called Dreamers.

This account is based on interviews with seven administration officials and others familiar with the interactions between Mr. Trump and Mr. Sessions in recent months who

requested anonymity because they are not permitted to speak publicly about confidential conversations between the president and his aides. Politico first reported in July that Mr. Sessions had once offered his resignation letter, but the circumstances that prompted the letter — and Mr. Trump's dressing down of the attorney general — have not previously been reported.

Press officers for the White House and Justice Department declined to comment.

The president's outburst came in the middle of an Oval Office meeting that Mr. Trump had with top advisers on May 17 to discuss candidates to take over the F.B.I. after the president fired its director, James B. Comey, earlier that month. In addition to Mr. Sessions, Vice President Mike Pence; Donald F. McGahn II; the White House counsel; and several other aides attended the meeting.

In the middle of the meeting, Mr. McGahn received a phone call from Rod J. Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general who had been overseeing the Russia investigation since Mr. Sessions recused himself from the inquiry months earlier. Mr. Sessions had stepped aside after it

was revealed he had not provided accurate testimony to Congress about his meetings with the Russian ambassador during the presidential campaign.

In the telephone call to Mr. McGahn, Mr. Rosenstein said he had decided to appoint Mr. Mueller to be a special counsel for the investigation. Congress had been putting pressure on Mr. Rosenstein to appoint a special counsel to put distance between the Trump administration and the Russia investigation, and just the day before The New York Times had revealed that Mr. Trump had once asked Mr. Comey to end the F.B.I.'s investigation into Michael T. Flynn, the former national security adviser.

When the phone call ended, Mr. McGahn relayed the news to the president and his aides. Almost immediately, Mr. Trump lobbed a volley of insults at Mr. Sessions, telling the attorney general it was his fault they were in the current situation. Mr. Trump told Mr. Sessions that choosing him to be attorney general was one of the worst decisions he had made, called him an "idiot," and said that he should resign.

An emotional Mr. Sessions told the president he would resign and left the Oval Office. That evening, as the Justice Department publicly announced the appointment of Mr. Mueller, the attorney general wrote a brief resignation letter to the president that was later sent to the White House. A person familiar with the events raised the possibility that

Mr. Sessions had become emotional because the impact of his recusal was becoming clear.

In the hours after the Oval Office meeting, however, Mr. Trump's top advisers intervened to save Mr. Sessions's job. Mr. Pence; Stephen K. Bannon, the president's chief strategist at the time; and Reince Priebus, his chief of staff, all advised that accepting Mr. Sessions's resignation would only sow more chaos inside the administration and rally Republicans in Congress against the president. Mr. Sessions, a former Alabama senator, served in the Senate for two decades.

The president relented, and eventually returned the resignation letter to Mr. Sessions — with a handwritten response on it.

For Mr. Sessions, the aggressiveness with which Mr. Trump has sought his removal was a blow. The son of a general store owner in a small town in Alabama, Mr. Sessions had long wanted to be the nation's top federal law enforcement official or to serve in another top law enforcement or judicial post. He earned a reputation in the Senate as someone tough on immigration, and was the first senator to back Mr. Trump in the presidential campaign.

But their relationship began to deteriorate little more than a month after Mr. Trump was sworn in as president, after Mr. Sessions's announcement that he was recusing himself from the Russia inquiry caught Mr. Trump by surprise.

The president spent months stewing about the recusal. In a July 19 interview with The Times, Mr. Trump said he never would have appointed Mr. Sessions to be attorney general if he knew he was going to recuse himself from the Russia investigation. Mr. Trump called the decision "very unfair to the president."

Days after the Times interview, Mr. Trump told aides he wanted to replace Mr. Sessions. Some of the president's aides, not sure if Mr. Trump really wanted the attorney general gone or was just working through his anger, were able to delay the firing until the president's anger passed.

But Mr. Trump continued his public attacks in the days that followed, including taking to Twitter to call him "weak" — a word that is among the harshest criticisms in Mr. Trump's arsenal.

Administration officials and some of Mr. Trump's outside advisers have puzzled at Mr. Sessions's decision to stay on. But people close to Mr. Sessions said that he did not leave because he had a chance to have an impact on what he sees as a defining issue of his career: curtailing legal and illegal immigration.

In recent weeks, he has spearheaded the effort to undo what he believed to be the Obama administration's dangerously lenient immigration policies, including the Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals program.

Mr. Sessions had no illusions about converting Mr. Trump to his side of the argument — Mr. Trump remains deeply ambivalent — and he had no illusions about repairing a damaged relationship he had once regarded as a friendship. But he told people he felt he had successfully pushed the president toward ending the Obama immigration policy, and thought it had given him increased leverage in the West Wing.

The president agreed to terminate the program, and on Sept. 5 Mr. Sessions stood alone at a lectern — a moment that seemed to be a significant victory for the attorney general.

But his satisfaction was fleeting. Mr. Trump quickly undercut Mr. Sessions in a tweet by saying he would reconsider whether or not to end the program, leading the attorney general to tell allies that he was frustrated that the president had muddled months of work leading to the announcement of the new policy.

On Wednesday evening, Democrats announced they had reached a deal with the president to quickly extend protections for young undocumented immigrants.

On Thursday morning, taking a vastly different position from the one Mr. Sessions had announced, the president tweeted about the need for protections for people brought here "through no fault of their own."

**The
New York
Times**

Williamson : Highflying Mnuchins Take the Country for a Ride

Elizabeth
Williamson

5-6 minutes

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is used to the better things in life. Brendan Smialowski/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Public servants are supposed to serve the public, not themselves. What part of that equation does Steven Mnuchin not understand?

The Trump administration's Treasury secretary is in hot water again. On Wednesday, ABC News reported that the Treasury Department's inspector general's office was looking at his request that a government jet fly him and his new wife on their European honeymoon. The jet costs taxpayers roughly \$25,000 an hour to operate. Mr. Mnuchin, a former Goldman Sachs banker, is worth more than \$300 million.

A Treasury spokesman said Mr. Mnuchin made the request, later withdrawn, because he needed the jet's "secure communications." Since Mr. Mnuchin is fifth in line of succession should anything happen to the president, this excuse was at least a tad more credible than the one offered for a ride he took with his wife, Louise Linton, last month that is also under official review. That trip was to Kentucky, where the couple could view the solar eclipse in the path of totality. The justification then was that Mr. Mnuchin wanted to speak with Kentuckians about tax reform and he needed to check on the gold at Fort Knox, which is presumably as safe and sound after Mr. Mnuchin's inspection as it was when he got there.

Screenshots of a post from Louise Linton's Instagram profile. The profile has since been made private and the post has been removed.

Taxpayers, who are being reimbursed for Ms. Linton's travel,

may never have known about that junket had she not decided to use a photo of herself alighting from the plane to show off her Hermes, Valentino and Tom Ford ensemble on Instagram. She then savaged a woman from Oregon who dared call the move "#deplorable." As the clothes designers began distancing themselves, Ms. Linton apologized to America — in an interview with a Washington society magazine that ran a photo of her, in a ball gown, on the cover.

Mr. Mnuchin comes from a world where rich people get free stuff all the time. Now he is in a different world, one where taxpayers are on the hook. "We're starting to see a pattern with Steve Mnuchin," says Walter Shaub, former chief of the Office of Government Ethics, now at the Campaign Legal Center. "This is the tone from the top, that President Trump himself has set: Ethics doesn't matter, and high positions of public trust come with perks."

The Mnuchins, along with Jared and Ivanka, have lost no time establishing themselves as one of the most rapacious It couples in Washington. The "Moochin' Mnuchins" were a hot topic on social media on Thursday, as commenters reviewed the pair's outrages, the latest dubbed the "Love Jet." Mr. Mnuchin was among the first administration grifters to draw attention from government ethics officials when he failed to disclose \$95 million in assets, including houses in the Hamptons and Los Angeles and a New York City co-op, on his financial disclosure form.

An innocent oversight, he said. Then, in a media interview, he, first, acknowledged that as a cabinet member he couldn't "promote anything that I'm involved in"; then, second, added, "but you should all send your kids to 'Lego Batman,'" a movie he produced. He then found himself apologizing again, sort of, in a memo to the ethics office, saying,

"It was not my intention to make a product endorsement."

Ms. Linton, who grew up in a Scottish castle, used her gap-year stint as an aid worker in Africa as fodder for a book in which she called herself a "skinny white Muzungu with long angel hair," writing, "I try to remember a smiling

gapped child with H.I.V. whose greatest joy was to sit on my lap and drink from a bottle of Coca-Cola."

But hey, it's not like it's all play and no work for Mr. Mnuchin. He's been spending plenty of time on Capitol Hill, negotiating, mostly with himself, on a tax reform proposal about

which very little is known except that it will probably include tax cuts for wealthy people like him. Last week, he tried to sell to skeptical conservatives Mr. Trump's Chuck-and-Nancy deal — the one with the Democratic leaders of the Senate and House to raise the debt ceiling. He was dismissed as a politically clueless former Democratic donor.

This Treasury secretary's ethical problems make Tim Geithner's nanny tax issues look quaint. Steven Mnuchin might be a darling on Wall Street; so far, he's a disgrace as a public servant.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Valerie Bauerlein

7-9 minutes

Hurricane Irma's Major Economic Toll on Florida Takes Shape

Arian Campo-Flores and

and lost economic output, could reach \$83 billion, according to an estimate by Moody's Analytics. That compares with a toll as high as \$108 billion for Hurricane Harvey, which struck Texas last month, the firm said.

Carnival Cruise Line, which canceled a half-dozen voyages scheduled to depart last weekend, was resuming service. Starting Thursday, all sailings are scheduled to depart on time, the cruise operator said.

Florida's \$800 million citrus industry, which has battled a host of challenges in recent years including disease, was especially hurt, with growers concerned that losses will reach 50% of the crop.

Sept. 14, 2017 5:30 a.m. ET

Hurricane Irma left Florida days ago but the state's economy, the fourth-largest in the U.S., is feeling the hit.

Its citrus groves are littered with knocked-down fruit and felled trees. Beach hotels and restaurants are cleaning up after being shut for a week with forced evacuations. After the cancellation of hundreds of flights and numerous cruises, the state's airports and seaports are just reopening. And on the Space Coast, home to the Kennedy Space Center, officials were still assessing potential damage and disruptions to launch schedules.

In the tourism magnet of Miami Beach, where the city's roughly 22,000 hotel rooms stood virtually empty for a week, the lost revenue from that stream alone could top \$25 million, according to city and industry tourism figures.

Irma is "going to be a very significant financial burden on businesses," said Jerry Libbin, chief executive of the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce.

To be sure, the state is still struggling with loss of life in the storm's aftermath: Not counting the deaths of eight nursing home patients Wednesday after Hurricane Irma knocked out power, at least 17 people in Florida have died under Irma-related circumstances, Associated Press reported late Wednesday.

Losses in agriculture, the state's second largest industry after tourism, are expected to be in the billions of dollars, according to the Florida Farm Bureau. In Okeechobee County in southern Florida, for instance, an informal evaluation cited by the Farm Bureau pegged the loss at \$16 million.

Overall, the total economic cost of Irma, including property damage

Catastrophe-modeling firm Karen Clark & Co. calculated that insured losses from Irma would be \$18 billion. The storm caused the most structural damage in the Florida Keys, while impacts on the mainland owed chiefly to fallen trees and inland flooding, according to the firm.

Yet Florida's economy is in solid shape, with a booming population that reached 20.6 million last year, record numbers of tourists and a growing health-care sector, said Sean Snaith, an economist at the University of Central Florida. The state's gross domestic product, a broad measure of goods and services produced, grew 3% last year, compared with 1.5% in the U.S., according to the Board of Economic Advisers.

"It's going to be a bit of a setback, but I don't think it's sufficient to knock us off the trend we've been on growthwise," he said.

Tourism officials emphasized that attractions were back in business. Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, an amusement park, said it was open for visitors and all of its 12,000 animals accounted for. In Orlando, Walt Disney World opened for normal hours Wednesday, except for its water resorts and a few hotels. The Legoland theme park was set to reopen Thursday, and the Orlando Eye, a 40-story observation wheel, was scheduled to resume operations pending completion of safety checks.

It is rare for Orlando's theme parks to close down. When Disney World closed at 5 p.m. Saturday and reopened Tuesday, it was only the fifth time the park had shut for a full day or more in its 46 years, according to a spokeswoman. The most recent closing was in October 2016, for a day-and-a-half due to Hurricane Matthew.

Jacksonville Beach in northern Florida was returning to normal Wednesday, with beachgoers playing corn hole at oceanfront bars. The Beachside Seafood Restaurant and Market had few empty seats. Though the establishment lost power for a short time during the storm, it didn't lose fresh seafood and other merchandise, said owner Jason Arteaga.

After seeing reports of the devastation from Hurricane Harvey and the ominous forecasts for Irma, Mr. Arteaga said he had been bracing for a lengthy disruption of his business. "I'm counting my blessings that we didn't have more time down," he said. "People are definitely out and about."

But Irma's damage wasn't as easily cleaned up for farmers who are contending with power failures, ruined crops and damaged equipment, according to the Florida Farm Bureau.

In Brevard County, east of Orlando, roughly 50,000 acres of pasture were underwater Wednesday, jeopardizing the health of cattle, the farm bureau said. In Putnam County, west of St. Augustine, vegetable growers couldn't enter fields because storm damage blocked access. Blueberry producers in central Florida were grappling with acreage that remained submerged.

Florida Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam took an aerial tour of the state Wednesday and said he saw huge swaths of destruction, including sheds and buildings split apart. He estimated the crop loss in southwest Florida would exceed 70% because of flooding of root systems and downed trees.

"Agriculture took it on the chin," he said. "I was surprised by the scale of flooding."

"Every single citrus grove has been affected adversely in some way by Hurricane Irma," said Michael Sparks, chief executive of the Florida Citrus Mutual, a marketing cooperative.

For the tourism industry, which generates more than \$100 billion in visitor spending annually, getting back up to speed is proving a slow process.

On Wednesday, the National Hotel in South Beach reopened with limited service, with full service expected by the weekend. Though the hotel's two buildings didn't experience significant damage, "it has definitely been an outdoor disaster," said Yaser Mohamad, the general manager.

The storm sent water into lobbies, coated the grounds in sand and ravaged the landscaping. With 152 rooms closed for a week, the financial hit from cancellations likely exceeds \$150,000, Mr. Mohamad said.

At Hank & Harry's Delicatessen, an eatery several blocks away, workers scrambled Wednesday to get the place fully operational by Friday. The restaurant lost an estimated \$60,000 in sales, along with \$25,000 in lost inventory, said owner Buzzy Sklar.

"There's really still no one on the streets," he said. But given that Miami was spared a direct hit by Irma, he said, "we got lucky. We will survive."

Write to Arian Campo-Flores at arian.campo-flores@wsj.com and Valerie Bauerlein at valerie.bauerlein@wsj.com

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Trump Tours Florida to Meet With Residents and Recovery Workers After Hurricane Irma

Rebecca Ballhaus

2 minutes

Sept. 14, 2017 3:02 p.m. ET

President Donald Trump visited Florida on Thursday to tour areas ravaged by Hurricane Irma and meet with residents and recovery workers, marking his first trip to the

state since the hurricane hit on Sunday.

In Fort Myers, Fla., he received a briefing on hurricane recovery efforts. The president also thanked local officials, shaking hands with Florida Sen. Marco Rubio —his onetime Republican primary opponent in the 2016 campaign—and saying of Florida's Republican Gov. Rick Scott: "The job he's done

is incredible....I hope this man right here, Rick Scott, runs for the Senate."

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Trump praised the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Coast Guard's lifesaving efforts and thanked the electric company Florida Power & Light for its efforts to restore power to residents' homes. "I will say they're way ahead

of schedule," Mr. Trump said of the company.

At a recovery center in Naples, Mr. Trump passed out bananas and pointed to a silver tin of hoagies—"Here's a nice one!"—as he mingled with residents and volunteers.

Write to Rebecca Ballhaus at Rebecca.Ballhaus@wsj.com

The
New York
Times

Harrowing Storms May Move Climate Debate, if Not G.O.P. Leaders

Alexander Burns

9-11 minutes

For years, climate change activists have faced a wrenching dilemma: how to persuade people to care about a grave but seemingly far-off problem and win their support for policies that might pinch them immediately in utility bills and at the pump.

But that calculus may be changing at a time when climatic chaos feels like a daily event rather than an airy abstraction, and storms powered by warming ocean waters wreak havoc on the mainland United States. Americans have spent weeks riveted by television footage of wrecked neighborhoods, displaced families, flattened Caribbean islands and submerged cities from Houston to Jacksonville.

"The conversation is shifting," said Senator Brian Schatz, Democrat of Hawaii. "Because even if you don't believe liberals, even if you don't believe scientists, you can believe your own eyes."

Despite consensus among scientists, not everyone is convinced that terrifying weather means climate change is an urgent threat. There is virtually no prospect of large-scale federal action on the issue in the near future, and President Trump has made a top priority of unraveling the Obama administration's environmental policies, including the Paris climate accord. Republicans, who control the White House and Congress, remain broadly skeptical of climate science and rely heavily on the electoral support of oil- and coal-producing states.

But an array of political leaders — including some members of Mr. Trump's party, along with emboldened Democrats and environmental activists — see the underlying dynamics of climate politics bending, as drastic weather

events throw up practical challenges for red and blue states alike. Mr. Schatz, one of the Democrats' most assertive spokesmen on global warming, said there were already "pockets of opportunity" to work with Republicans on measures to reinforce coastlines and support solar- and wind-energy production, though not on more ambitious policies.

"We can get a fair amount of bipartisanship if we talk about severe weather and resiliency," Mr. Schatz said. "For some people, it's just about the phrase 'climate change' being too politically loaded."

Most movement among Republicans has come from moderates and lawmakers from areas vulnerable to flooding, where seeming oblivious to extreme weather could be politically risky. There have been no notable cracks in Republican opposition to climate policy among party leaders, or even within the powerful Texas congressional delegation — a group battered by Hurricane Harvey but fiercely protective of the state's oil economy.

For the most part, senior Republicans have avoided directly discussing climate in the aftermath of Harvey and Hurricane Irma, which pounded the Southeast this week. They have focused chiefly on scrambling to get government aid to stricken states. But Mr. Trump, on a visit to Florida on Thursday, appeared to indicate his views on climate were unchanged. "We've had bigger storms," he told reporters.

Flooding in a suburb of Beaumont, Tex., in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. Christopher Lee for The New York Times

But in Florida, where Irma left more than a dozen dead and millions without electricity, a handful of Republicans have been more outspoken. The Republican mayor

of Miami, Tomás Regalado, urged Mr. Trump last week to reconsider his climate policies. Several Florida lawmakers founded a bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus in the House of Representatives, and the group's Republican membership grew this year to two dozen.

The safe ground for Republicans, party strategists say, may be embracing proposals to mitigate certain effects of environmental change, while skirting debate about more drastic actions that experts see as essential.

That approach reached even the White House this week, with Thomas P. Bossert, Mr. Trump's Homeland Security adviser, declaring that the administration takes "seriously the threat of climate change." He added, somewhat vaguely, "Not the cause of it, but the things that we observe."

Representative Scott Taylor of Virginia, a Republican whose district hugs the Atlantic Coast, said his constituents were growing more sensitive to the implications of climate change, including voters who lean to the right. Mr. Taylor, who is a member of the climate caucus, said he was still wary of hobbling fossil-fuel companies, but favors narrower measures to address dangerous environmental conditions. The Republican nominee for governor of Virginia this year, Ed Gillespie, has taken a similar tack, ignoring climate as an issue but releasing a plan on coastal flooding.

"We have to deal with issues like sea-level rise and flooding and resiliency," Mr. Taylor said, cautioning, "I don't think we're there, in a bipartisan way, for comprehensive action."

Jay Faison, a wealthy Republican donor who has made clean energy a personal cause, said he found Republicans increasingly open to engaging around the edges of the climate issue. Mr. Faison said he had reason to believe there was

"some appetite" among congressional leaders for backing resilient infrastructure and energy research.

"I'd like to see more, faster," Mr. Faison said. "But we play the hand we're dealt."

Political polling has long found most voters sympathetic to policies that protect the environment, including the Paris agreement and rules proposed by the Obama administration to curb power-plant emissions. But Americans have also tended to rank climate low among their priorities, behind issues like health care and jobs.

Still, the trend toward taking climate change seriously has been unmistakable, and pollsters say it may intensify after a season of superstorms. In a Gallup poll this year, 45 percent of Americans said they worried about global warming a "great deal," a sharp increase from the share in 2016 and the highest ever recorded in the poll. About six in 10 said they believed the consequences of global warming are already being felt.

Flooding along the Black Creek River in Middleburg, Fla., after Hurricane Irma. Johnny Milano for The New York Times

But liberals and conservatives hold widely divergent views on climate, even within hard-hit states like Texas and Florida. And research conducted by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication found that many who are concerned about climate change remain less convinced that it will harm them directly.

Geoff Garin, a Democratic pollster who has studied climate as a campaign issue, said that it was most relevant to voters as a "reference point" to judge a candidate's worldview, and that voters tended to see those who reject climate science as extremists. Mr. Garin said catastrophic weather

could make certain hard-line views less acceptable.

"The salience of climate change denialism grows at moments when the consequences of that are more abundantly clear," Mr. Garin said, "such as when the country is hit by two exceptionally powerful storms, one right after the other."

Is unclear whether climate will play a major part in the 2018 elections, when Democrats are defending a number of Senate seats in states that produce carbon fuel. Climate may feature more prominently in the 2020 elections, when a wider range of states will be contested and the

environmental policies Mr. Trump has pursued through executive action — like withdrawing from the Paris agreement — will be more directly at issue.

But some Democratic candidates and political donors hope to punish conservative politicians before then. In Florida, Senator Bill Nelson, a Democrat seeking re-election next year, quickly went on the offensive this week, accusing one potential Republican opponent, Gov. Rick Scott, of having ignored the mounting threat of climate change.

And advisers to Tom Steyer, a billionaire investor who has spent

millions supporting Democrats, said his political committee might seek to link Republicans in Florida, Nevada and California to environmental catastrophes in those states, like the summer hurricanes and wildfires out west.

Mr. Steyer said in an interview that acknowledging the impact of devastating storms should not get Republicans off the hook for opposing efforts to address global warming over all. He predicted the "human tragedy" of climate change would be a permanent feature of politics. "This is not an isolated incident," he said of Irma and

Harvey. "It's going to happen again, only worse."

Mr. Regalado, the Miami mayor, said many of his Republican colleagues were wary of being "called crazy or liberals" if they talked about climate. But he said voters on the ground had grown sharply aware of the risks they face.

"I don't think my statements are going to change the way the administration thinks or the governor thinks, but let me tell you, people are afraid," Mr. Regalado said. "People are understanding there is a new normal now."



Diplomacy? Tillerson Says His Top Priority Is Efficiency

Gardiner Harris
6-8 minutes

Critics say Rex W. Tillerson is still acting like a corporate executive and not the secretary of state. Al Drago for The New York Times

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson said Thursday that the most important thing he could do during his tenure was to make the State Department more efficient, and in a lengthy letter to employees he promised that the efforts would yield significant savings.

To his critics, his remarks and the letter outlining his proposals were simply more evidence of their contention that the former petroleum engineer is still acting like a corporate chief executive and not the nation's chief diplomat.

In the letter, Mr. Tillerson wrote with a businessman's shorthand that his plan "contains seven ambitious proposals with investments that will generate a minimum deliverable of 10 percent (\$5B) in efficiencies relative to current (FY2017) spending over the next five years, with an aspirational general interest target of up to 20 percent (\$10B)."

"The most important thing I can do is to enable this organization to be more effective, more efficient and for all of you to take greater satisfaction in what you do day in and day out," Mr. Tillerson told a gathering of embassy employees in London.

"Because if I accomplish that," he continued, "that will go on forever, and you will create the State Department for the future."

Since the day Mr. Tillerson arrived at the State Department, aides have remarked that one of the few aspects of the job that seemed to truly delight Mr. Tillerson, a former chief executive of Exxon Mobil, were detailed discussions about decision trees and bureaucratic hurdles.

For just as long, veteran diplomats have pointed out that tinkering with the department's organization chart is the kind of necessary but thankless duty that a secretary usually assigns an assistant. A low-level assistant.

"It's really unfortunate that that is the secretary's highest priority," said John NegroponTE, a career diplomat who was President George W. Bush's ambassador to the United Nations.

If Mr. Tillerson had hired a capable team of top aides, they could have reorganized the department while Mr. Tillerson focused on more important affairs, Mr. NegroponTE said.

"I think he has it all wrong," Mr. NegroponTE said.

It is a view shared by many at the State Department who have long hoped that Mr. Tillerson would help imbue their work with the kind of larger purpose for which many joined the Foreign Service. John Kerry, Mr. Tillerson's predecessor, exhorted them to save the planet from climate change. Condoleezza Rice charged them with fulfilling the human yearning for freedom and democracy.

Mr. Tillerson wants to fix their email system.

"That's why we call it a process redesign," he said Thursday, using the kind of management talk rarely

uttered by the nation's chief diplomat.

To be sure, the flights of rhetoric of Mr. Tillerson's predecessors sometimes fell with a thud. And the State Department's email system is truly horrible, having entirely crashed recently for most of a day.

But employees yearn to be part of something bigger than a bureaucratic Gordian knot, and Mr. Tillerson rarely even tries to speak of a larger purpose.

The capital "B" in his letter to employees referred to billions of dollars. Even so, such a plan would deliver far fewer savings, spread out over a much longer period of time, than Mr. Tillerson's own budget plan initially envisioned, which will be greeted with some relief both in the department and on Capitol Hill.

Members of Congress have complained that Mr. Tillerson has given them almost no details of his plans, and a spending blueprint passed last week by a crucial Senate committee largely rejected Mr. Tillerson's proposed cuts, with a bipartisan group of senators saying that now was not the time to retreat from diplomacy.

Mr. Tillerson must provide the White House with an outline of his redesign by Friday, although he has said that the full details will most likely not be available until the end of the year, with implementation beginning next year.

Mr. Tillerson's relationship with President Trump has deteriorated in recent weeks, particularly after he sharply criticized Mr. Trump's reaction to the racially charged violence in Charlottesville, Va. Rumors that he would soon resign have swirled for weeks.

His remarks Thursday did nothing to put such rumors to rest.

"The most important thing I want to do during the time I have," he began at one point, suggesting that the remainder of his tenure was limited.

In his letter, Mr. Tillerson also said he was looking at more flexible, family-friendly working schedules and that he was making provisions to allow more family members to fill needed jobs in embassies.

Alone among the Trump administration's cabinet secretaries, Mr. Tillerson has kept a hiring freeze in place, preventing spouses of many diplomats from taking jobs in embassies, a highly unpopular policy.

Such spousal jobs are often an accepted part of hardship assignments and crucial to the family finances of diplomats. Spouses can often do such jobs far more cheaply than another diplomat, who must be sent out separately and given independent housing. Mr. Tillerson's nod to the problem of spousal jobs will most likely be well received.

"Our working groups have also identified areas where we can improve our human resource functions, empower leadership at all levels, improve management support services to reduce redundancies while ensuring you have the tools you need to do your job," Mr. Tillerson wrote in his letter.

Mr. Tillerson wrote that some of his redesign efforts had already been implemented, including the closing of many of the nearly 60 special envoy offices.

"Once a solution is ready to go, we are going to put it to work as soon as we can," he wrote.



Editorial : The Return to Regular Order

The Editorial Board

3 minutes

Sept. 14, 2017 7:24 p.m. ET

The political equivalent of a solar eclipse hit Washington this week, though you won't see this reported elsewhere. Yes, the House of Representatives finally returned to regular spending order.

The House on Thursday voted to send 12 appropriations bills to the Senate. The chamber approved four of these 2018 spending measures prior to its August recess, and the remaining eight were debated and passed as part of the broader Thursday vote. They had previously passed out of committee. This is the first time since 2004 that a House Republican majority has passed all of its individual

spending bills, and it is a long overdue fulfillment of a campaign promise the GOP made when it retook the House in 2010.

The intervening years have seen a series of stopgap continuing resolutions and blowout omnibus bills. Congressional spenders love omnibuses because they create more opportunities for pork or policy riders. But the process robs individual Members and the public of an open debate over spending priorities, even as it jams Members into either passing a fait accompli or shutting down the government.

As a whole, the 12 bills specify \$1.2 trillion in discretionary spending in fiscal 2018, an increase of about

\$60 billion over fiscal 2017. Nearly all of the increase goes to defense and veterans, and most domestic agencies will see cuts ranging from 2% to 6% of their budgets.

The House is still wrangling over its budget resolution for fiscal 2018, which will be the vehicle for tax reform as well as a blueprint for cutting some \$200 billion in mandatory spending. Some Members are griping that the mandatory reforms don't cut deeper, but promises in budget outlines are rarely fulfilled. Facilitating tax reform is the only real purpose of the outline, and Congress would be wise in the coming years to rewrite the rules for the entire budget process.

Credit goes to Budget Chair Diane Black and Armed Services Chairman Mac Thornberry, who negotiated the overall spending discretionary numbers that allowed appropriators to get to this conclusion. The Republican Senate will struggle to pass its spending bills through Democratic filibusters, but maybe the House's show of responsibility will shame the Senate into acting. Ok, maybe not.

Appeared in the September 15, 2017, print edition.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Board

5-6 minutes

Editorial : One Last ObamaCare Try

The Editorial Board

Sept. 14, 2017 7:26 p.m. ET

Senator Lindsey Graham admits that when a defense specialist like him feels compelled to roll out a health-care bill, something has gone wrong—and that's an understatement for the Republican failure to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The question is whether a last-ditch effort by Sen. Graham and a few colleagues represents an improvement over the Obama Care status quo. The answer is yes.

Sen. Graham and Sen. Bill Cassidy (R., La.) this week unveiled a bill that would start to unwind ObamaCare. The legislation repeals the individual and employer mandates and the 2.3% medical device tax. The bill replaces money spent on tax credits and Medicaid expansion with block grants to states, which would allow Governors to experiment with insurance reforms. Another selling point is that a rejiggered formula will divvy up federal dollars more equitably, as states such as Massachusetts and California haul in an outsize share under current law.

Block grants are certainly progress: The Obama Administration's Medicaid expansion enrolled working-age, childless adults above the poverty line, and the feds footed most of the bill to bait states to participate. The program reimbursed at a much lower rate for the disabled and children, the traditional Medicaid population. This has resulted in some states under-covering the most vulnerable.

Graham-Cassidy is less ambitious than the Senate's ObamaCare replacement that failed over the summer, and we could go on at length about its limitations. But the proposal at least takes most decision-making out of Washington and puts a spending cap on Medicaid and ObamaCare. Reform-minded Governors would have the chance to create showcases for insurance-market innovation.

As with past health-care failures, Republicans can only lose two Members. Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.) is as persuadable as Chuck Schumer, and the same may be true of Sen. Susan Collins of Maine. Sen. John McCain (R., Ariz.) shot down the last repeal attempt on dubious objections about an open process. Some think Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R., Alaska) is winnable, but she seemed amenable to the last bill—until she bailed at the final hour.

Heritage Action waded in to note that earlier versions of Graham-Cassidy did not repeal all of ObamaCare's taxes—as if they would vanish if Congress does nothing. Sen. Mike Lee (R., Utah) usually follows Heritage, though Sen. Lee's office said he's "encouraged" by what he's seen but has yet to make a final decision.

The question for Members is: What is the alternative? The budget procedure that allows the Senate to address the law with a 51-vote majority expires on Sept. 30. ObamaCare's exchanges will continue to deteriorate, and Democrats will blame Republicans for every premium increase from here to November 2018. The law will require who knows how many patches and bailouts in coming years, and consumers will continue to face higher prices and fewer choices.

Lamar Alexander (R., Tenn.) is trying to work a deal with Patty Murray (D., Wa.) to mitigate some of the consumer pain for next year. The idea is to swap subsidies for insurers for more state flexibility. Yet Democrats have so far been unwilling to relax the state waiver process to allow for more than de minimis changes. The GOP's negotiating hand will not become stronger as the election approaches.

The best path forward is to pass Graham-Cassidy, and improve or amend it later as necessary, or perhaps consider discrete bills to mend health-care markets. This has the added political advantage of at least fulfilling some facsimile of the "repeal and replace" promises Republicans have made to voters for seven years.

One lesson for moderate Republicans is that no dilution or revision will placate the left, which has panned Graham-Cassidy as evil and heartless sight unseen. The press is suggesting that the timeline is too quick to ram through such a consequential bill, but then the Affordable Care Act re-engineered one-sixth of the economy in the middle of the night on Christmas Eve in 2009.

The Cassidy-Graham bill appeared on the same day as a "Medicare for all" proposal from Sen. Bernie Sanders (Ind., Vt.), and don't be surprised if voters start looking to the left for solutions. Graham-Cassidy is the best remaining chance the GOP has to make incremental progress on health care, before they face voters next year having to explain their failure.

Appeared in the September 15, 2017, print edition.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Strassel

6-7 minutes

Strassel : Here's What Really Happened to Hillary

Kimberley A. Strassel

Sept. 14, 2017 7:27 p.m. ET

Republicans have issues, but Democrats have them too. Witness the two individuals who dominated

this week's news—and who conveniently represent the left's most crippling problems.

Hillary Clinton is again everywhere, touting her new memoir and adding to the list of who and what are to blame for her loss: Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, Barack Obama, James Comey, Jill Stein, Vladimir Putin, Julian Assange, Anthony

Weiner, sexism, misogyny, the New York Times, lazy women, liberal activists and the "godforsaken Electoral College." All she's missing is climate change.

Hillary's take on "What Happened" has unsurprisingly unleashed another round of analysis about her mistakes—Wisconsin, deplorables, email. These sorts of detailed

postmortems of failed campaigns are popular, but they tend to obscure the bigger reasons for failure. In this case: The Democratic Party saddled itself with an ethically compromised and joyless candidate, because it had nobody else.

Hillary spent eight years planning her first presidential bid, and the

next eight warning Democrats not to get in the way of her second. The Clinton Foundation was erected to serve as bank and Rolodex, and to enable the Clintons to retain their grip over the party. And that party was committed to a Clinton coronation, right up to Mr. Sanders's cheeky assault.

Mr. Obama aided Mrs. Clinton's ambitions by decimating his party. By the time Barack Obama finished his eight years in office, his party held 65 fewer House seats, 14 fewer governorships and controlled 30 fewer state legislatures. It had turned a once-filibuster-proof Senate majority into minority status. The big-tent Democratic coalition shriveled to a coastal, progressive minority, wiping out a generation of Democratic politicians and most of the party's political diversity.

And so the party nominated perhaps the only Democrat in the country who could rival Donald Trump in unpopularity—and beat him in untrustworthiness. Mr. Sanders refused to go after Mrs. Clinton on her ethical baggage, even though it was her biggest weakness and despite how glaringly

obvious was the risk that her foundation and server scandals would hobble a general-election campaign. The parties gave the country a choice between two unpopular people, and the country disliked her more. The real question is how Democrats rebuild a party whose senior leaders in the House boast an average age of 72 and which has almost no young, experienced up-and-comers.

Which brings us to Mr. Sanders, the symbol of Democrats' other big problem. This week the senator, flanked by about one-third of Senate Democrats, released his "Medicare for All" proposal to nationalize health care. These are the ascendant voices in the party. Yet there are few of them, because their agenda is highly unpopular.

Mr. Sanders was an unexpected force in the primary, though mostly because he wasn't Hillary. Sanders supporters resent this argument, and claim the only reason his agenda didn't triumph is because the DNC robbed him of the election. If so, why did Bernie's people and ideas fail spectacularly everywhere else on the ballot?

In Wisconsin Mr. Sanders campaigned for Russ Feingold, who promised a \$15 federal minimum wage, an end to trade deals and free college. Mr. Feingold lost to Republican Sen. Ron Johnson. In upstate New York, in a white, working-class district, Mr. Sanders endorsed Zephyr Teachout, who railed against bankers and lobbyists, fought fracking and *Citizens United*, and opposed trade. Republican John Faso beat her for the open seat by eight percentage points, on a promise to kill Dodd-Frank. Democrats wouldn't even vote for Tim Canova, the man who primaried Mr. Sanders's archenemy, Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

An extraordinary 79% of Colorado voters said no to a ballot initiative for ColoradoCare, the state version of Mr. Sanders's universal health-care proposal. This in a state that Hillary Clinton won. Liberal Vermont pulled its own single-payer plug in 2014. In California, Mr. Sanders endorsed and campaigned for Proposition 61, which was designed to impose prescription drug price controls. It went down to substantial

defeat in a state Mrs. Clinton won by 30 points.

Progressives will argue that all they need to elect a Bernie or an Elizabeth is the right way of pitching their "populist" policies of free health care or price-controlled drugs to the white working class and independents. But so far they've been unable to sell them even to bright blue states. And this wishful thinking ignores that even if voters supported some of those provisions, they'd also have to swallow a progressive agenda that includes an energy crackdown, a retreat from the terror fight, and the culture of identity politics.

Republicans have failed to unite or govern or pass their biggest priorities. But the political analysts are setting themselves up for another surprise if they ignore the big reasons Democrats lost this election, and what comes next.

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Antifa: Guardians against fascism or lawless thrill-seekers? (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/michael.miller.1466>

15-19 minutes

Self-described antifa activists John Cookenboo, left, and Vincent Yochelson in Oakland, Calif. (Nick Otto/For The Washington Post)

BERKELEY, Calif. — On the morning of the protest, Sean Hines woke with a sense of purpose he'd seldom felt. He was a 20-year-old high school dropout with no car, no job and no money. A year and a half ago, he'd been arrested for a drunken brawl. Now Hines was about to be arrested again, but for something he believed in.

In his Santa Rosa halfway house, Hines dressed in all black. He chugged an energy drink, popped some nicotine gum and climbed into a friend's car that blasted German punk rock as it barreled toward Berkeley.

"Alerta, alerta, anti-fascista!" the chorus shrieked.

It was a call to arms for militant anti-fascists, or "antifa" — and Hines was heading it.

But the Aug. 27 protest in Berkeley did not go according to plan. Police quickly arrested Hines and 12 others. Then, in images broadcast across the country, more than 100

antifa activists leapt over barricades and stormed Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, attacking a handful of President Trump supporters and right-wing activists.

Left-wing counterprotesters clashed with right-wing protesters and Trump supporters on Aug. 27 in Berkeley, Calif. Violence erupted when a small group of masked antifa and anarchists attacked right-wing demonstrators. Left-wing counterprotesters clashed with right-wing protesters and Trump supporters on Aug. 27 in Berkeley, Calif. (The Washington Post)

Left-wing counterprotesters clashed with right-wing protesters and Trump supporters on Aug. 27 in Berkeley, Calif. Violence erupted when a small group of masked antifa and anarchists attacked right-wing demonstrators. (The Washington Post)

A month earlier, few Americans had heard of antifa. Then came Charlottesville, where antifa activists were credited with protecting clergy members from attacks by white supremacists.

The violence in Berkeley led to a backlash, including from the left. The city's mayor, a Democrat, called for antifa to be classified as a gang and for the University of California at Berkeley to cancel conservative speeches later this month to avoid more violence.

[Black-clad antifa members attack right-wing demonstrators in Berkeley]

In Washington, where antifa smashed storefronts and torched a limousine on Inauguration Day, authorities fear the far-left activists will strike again Saturday, when the Mall will host the "Juggalo March" — a gathering of fans of the rap group Insane Clown Posse — and a pro-Trump event dubbed the Mother of All Rallies.

If Trump's election has emboldened the far right, then it has also energized its enemies.

Hidden behind masks, however, antifa activists remain mysterious. Are they everyday citizens guarding against the rise of a Fourth Reich? Or are they, as Trump has claimed, merely the "alt-left" — a lawless mirror image of the white supremacists they oppose?

On Thursday, Trump claimed recent antifa antics had justified his much-criticized response to Charlottesville, in which he blamed the violence on "both sides."

"I think, especially in light of the advent of antifa, if you look at what's going on there, you have some pretty bad dudes on the other side also, and essentially that's what I said," he told reporters Thursday.

Interviews with a dozen antifa activists show they come from a variety of backgrounds and are only loosely affiliated. Some, like Hines, are youths in search of a cause. Others have been demonstrating for decades. Many are anarchists, although some vote. They employ a range of peaceful tactics, including doxing, or exposing, white supremacists. While they are all open to using violence, some embrace it — even glorify it.

What unites them is the belief that free speech is secondary to squashing fascism before it takes root in the United States.

"If everyone is punching a Nazi, it's eventually going to create a mass militant movement based around anti-fascist," Hines said. "That hopefully will be enough to stop them from gaining power."

'We're each other's enemy' Sean Hines, member of Antifa in Northern California. (Nick Otto/For The Washington Post)

Among the scores of antifa who stormed the park that day in California were John Cookenboo, 27, and Vincent Yochelson, 23. The Bay Area natives began protesting against racism in 2009 when Oscar Grant, a 22-year-old African American, was shot in the back by a white Bay Area Rapid Transit officer. In the years since, they have attended dozens of demonstrations,

including Occupy Oakland and Black Lives Matter marches.

Two years ago, Trump's presidential campaign changed everything. White supremacists began holding rallies in the Bay Area. Antifa began confronting them — with force.

"There has been a galvanization of both sides," Yochelson said. "We're each other's enemy."

The same thing was happening across the country. On Inauguration Day, two incidents 2,000 miles apart hinted that the conflict — dating to standoffs between skinheads and anti-racists in the 1980s — had intensified.

[Anarchists and antifa: The history of the activists Trump calls the 'alt-left']

In Washington, a masked antifa sucker-punched Richard Spencer, a leader of the alt-right movement that seeks to create a whites-only "ethno-state." Footage of the attack spawned Internet memes as well as a question many Americans seemed to take seriously: Is it okay to punch a fascist?

The same day, an anti-fascist protester was shot in the stomach, allegedly by a Trump supporter, during demonstrations against a speech by right-wing blogger Milo Yiannopoulos at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Whether Americans had heard of antifa or not, violence involving the far left and far right suddenly seemed to be everywhere.

Nowhere was it as intense and frequent as in Berkeley.

On Feb. 1, dozens of antifa smashed windows and lit fires on the UC-Berkeley campus, leading the school to cancel a speech by Yiannopoulos. A month later, Trump supporters and white supremacists responded by gathering in MLK Park for a free-speech rally.

Armed with military-grade riot gear, shields and walkie-talkies, Cookenboo and Yochelson were among the antifa to meet the rallygoers in what would become known as the first "Battle of Berkeley." Videos from the March 4 melee show both sides carrying weapons. Kyle Chapman, the founder of the right-wing group the Fraternal Order of Alt-Knights, was later charged with a felony for allegedly wielding a leaded stick.

"I can't get into too many specifics, but there was definitely an atmosphere of violence that day," Cookenboo said. "Several people were injured, and me and Vincent pulled some people back from the line, pretty bloodied up."

On April 15, Cookenboo and Yochelson were walking to the same park to confront many of the same right-wing protesters when they were arrested on suspicion of wearing masks while committing a criminal offense. Police also suspected Cookenboo of inciting a riot and possessing a switchblade knife. Charges have yet to be filed.

"I think they saw a group of people walking toward the protest in a lot of gear and felt that this point was the only time they'd really be able to interdict us," Cookenboo said.

While they were in custody, Hines was in the fray for the first time.

"I did get pepper-sprayed in the face once, but I enjoyed it," he said of the second "Battle of Berkeley." "I'm a bit of an adrenaline junkie, so things like that kind of excite me."

For Hines, antifa is the latest in a succession of left-wing causes. He first took an interest in anarchism four years ago. At one point, he was aligned with the Irish Republican Army. He now calls himself a "libertarian socialist," communist and antifa.

He said the movement has helped him through a difficult 18 months. In April 2016, he dropped out of high school about the time he assaulted a Whole Foods security guard.

"I tried to steal a bottle," he said. "I was pretty out of it."

Hines, who said he suffers from addiction, completed a diversion program and the charges were dropped. He has spent the past six months in halfway houses, where he has a curfew and must pass nightly breathalyzer tests. He was logging hours each day on Facebook, debating politics. Eventually, he decided to stop debating and act.

"I wanted a purpose. I wanted an identity. That's the reason why I became part of antifa," he said. "I wanted to fight for something."

Like many in the antifa movement, Hines says that had more people joined far-left militants in fighting fascists in prewar Germany and Italy, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini never would have come to power.

Asked whether that comparison glorified today's antifa violence, Hines said: "It needs to be glorified. We need to attract people to our side." He was unconcerned that skirmishes could escalate into shootouts. "At least in that way we'd be able to fight back," he said.

Antifa veterans are wary of newcomers raring for a fight, however.

"A lot of people are coming into antifa because of the thrill of violence, and that's not what we're about," said Mike Isaacson, an anarchist PhD student and adjunct professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "Anti-fascists are community oriented, and we do make the effort to keep everyone as safe as possible."

In some cases, antifa have unwittingly attacked bystanders, even sympathizers. Cookenboo is keenly aware that not everyone on the other side is a fascist — his father voted for Trump. He and Yochelson grew up in middle-class households, attended some community college and hold steady jobs: Cookenboo at a marijuana processing plant, Yochelson at a catering company and a Unitarian church, where he is a chef.

The antifa movement isn't "some strange, cloaked organization," Yochelson said. "It's your neighbors."

He and Cookenboo say a feeling of powerlessness drives the antifa movement and its opponents.

"The people on the far right have . . . a sense that their country is being stolen from them, and that's what Donald Trump has seized upon," Cookenboo said.

"On the left, it's an opposite but different story," he continued. "I see all these videos of people being very racist to minorities on public transit or in grocery stores or anywhere that they can. We see this resurgence. And I can't do anything to help those people, though I want to. So the only thing I can really do when these things happen is to go out and march in the street."

'Crawl back into the rat holes they came out of'

Black bloc tactics are used by "antifascist action" or "antifa" protesters. Here's what that means. Video: What is the black bloc? (Gillian Brockell/The Washington Post)

Black bloc tactics are used by "antifascist action" or "antifa" protesters. Here's what that means. (Gillian Brockell/The Washington Post)

When Cookenboo and Yochelson arrived early to survey the scene on Aug. 27, they found MLK Park quiet. A "No to Marxism in America" rally had been canceled, and there were few right-wing protesters. So they decided to leave their riot gear in the car.

A few hours later, thousands of counterprotesters, including clergy

members and a Holocaust survivor, peacefully marched to the park.

Then antifa arrived.

"It was actually a really great event. There was tons of solidarity and tons of people from across the political spectrum," said Molly Armstrong, co-chair of the East Bay chapter of Democratic Socialists of America, who gave a speech linking white supremacy to capitalist alienation. "But a handful of people were violent, and that's what everyone wants to focus on."

The violence didn't just overshadow the counterprotest, however. It exposed a deep divide within the left over the antifa movement.

Antifa were more concerned with "elevating their self-image" and "appearing heroic" than doing "less glamorous" work that might lead to real change, anti-capitalist columnist Chris Hedges wrote for Truthdig.

In a student newspaper op-ed, UC-Berkeley alumnus Mitchell Zimmerman compared the antifa movement to the Weathermen, a leftist extremist group that carried out bombings in protest of the Vietnam War. "We've seen it before," he wrote, "young people whose infatuation with violence undermines the progressive cause."

Rather than prevent fascism, antifa violence could further it, argued Laurie Marhofer, an assistant professor at the University of Washington who has studied Hitler's rise.

"Violent confrontations with antifascists gave the Nazis a chance to paint themselves as the victims of a pugnacious, lawless left," she wrote for the Conversation. "They seized it." Yvette Felarca, at center with microphone, a middle school teacher in Oakland, leads a protest against President Trump in Berkeley. (Michael Miller/The Washington Post)

Yvette Felarca denies the antifa movement plays into its enemies' hands. The diminutive middle school teacher has become the face of anti-fascism in the Bay Area. She said she was cut on the arm when her group, By Any Means Necessary, and antifa activists confronted white supremacists in Sacramento last year. She is facing a felony assault charge over the clash.

Speaking shortly before she led a protest on Berkeley's campus this month, Felarca said antifa aggression on Aug. 27 ensured she wasn't attacked again.

"They should be forced to crawl back into the rat holes they came out of," she said of white supremacists. "Charlottesville showed [they are dangerous]. We can't have another Heather Heyer" — a reference to the woman killed when a vehicle plowed through counterprotesters there.

The antifa movement should be seen in the context of rising intolerance on the left, particularly on college campuses, said Mark Peterson, a professor of public policy, political science and law at UCLA. This intolerance is ironic, he said, because decades ago, it was suspected leftists who were barred from universities and blacklisted from Hollywood.

"So it can't simply be left to a young and not particularly well historically informed group of people to say,

'We get to determine who's a fascist and ... do whatever we want to them,'" he said.

Cookkenboo and Yochelson said they didn't witness the Aug. 27 attacks but acknowledged they probably weren't necessary.

"In this particular instance, it looked a little bit — what's the word?" Cookkenboo asked.

"Excitable," Yochelson said.

The backlash spurred them to speak to the media about antifa, but that then led to death threats. Yochelson, who wears a bullet as an earring, said he wasn't worried. Neither was his friend.

"I've taken steps to protect myself," Cookkenboo said, adding that he owns a shotgun and an AR-15 rifle.

But the violence also tarnished the 13 people arrested on mostly minor charges that day. None of the arrests was in connection to the dramatic assaults captured on camera, which happened after police had retreated, allowing antifa to overrun the park.

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"The news coverage the next day was all about 'violent antifa' and then they showed our mug shots," said James Dominic, 23. The son of a Marine veteran, Dominic said he is anti-fascist but not antifa. He went to the park as a medic in case anyone was attacked by white supremacists and was arrested for handing out surgical masks. He blamed the media, not antifa.

Hines said he didn't mind being connected to the mayhem. When he was detained for wearing a mask in violation of city code and resisting arrest, a journalist asked him whether he had come to be violent. "I can neither confirm nor deny that," he said with a smile.

Four days later, Hines said his only regret was that he was arrested before things got interesting.

"Most people I know love me now," he said, sitting on a couch in his halfway house in front of a bowl of cigarette butts. "I'm not trying to brag, but I've become pretty popular."

Perry Stein and Julie Tate contributed to this report.