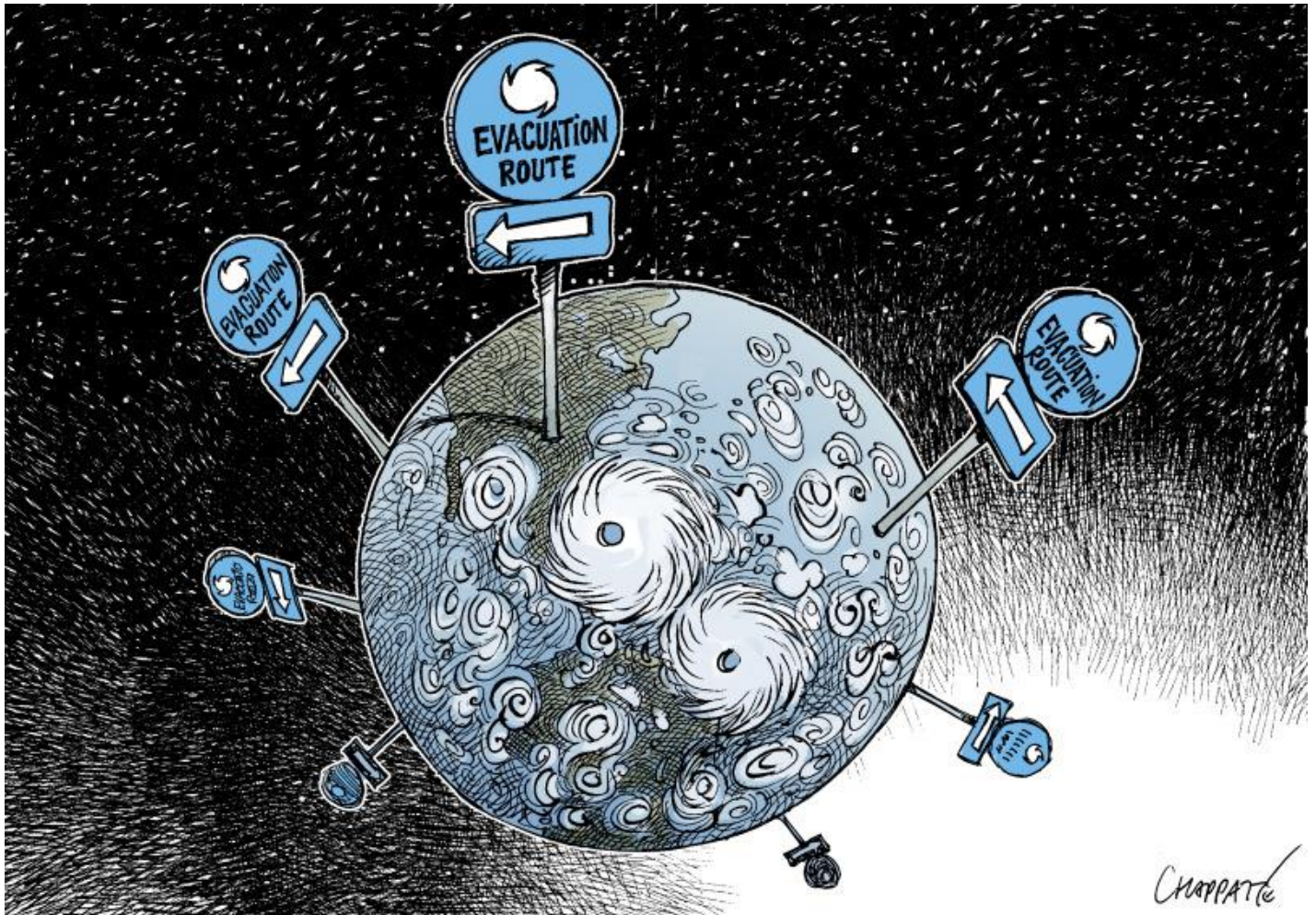


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FRANCE – EUROPE

Newsweek : French Resistance: Emmanuel Macron Facing Days of Protests Over Labor Reforms

By Josh Lowe On 9/18/17 at 12:59 PM

3 minutes

French President Emmanuel Macron has a vast majority in Parliament, the backing of other EU leaders impressed with his May defeat of far-right Marine Le Pen, and self-confidence so large that aides have compared his governing style to the Roman God Jupiter.

But as for so many French presidents, out on the streets, it's a different story.

In the coming 10 days, trade unions and leftist protesters plan to step up their opposition to Macron's labor

market reforms. Leftist opposition politician Jean-Luc Melenchon has called for large-scale street action on September 23, and several other major demonstrations are slated for the intervening days.

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Many on the French hard left are vehemently opposed to the changes, which will simplify employment rules by making it easier to hire and fire workers. Leftists say the measures, which are set to be adopted by the government on September 22, may weaken job security and take power out of unions' hands.

On Monday, truck drivers who are members of the CFDT union, France's largest, blocked highways, Reuters reported. "Today is a warning," Patrick Blaise, secretary general of CFDT's truck drivers, told *Le Parisien* newspaper. "If they don't listen to us, CFDT's truckers won't stop there."

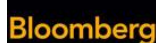
The CGT union will stage another round of protests on September 21. On September 25, truck drivers belonging to the CGT and Force Ouvriere, France's third-largest union, will launch further action, including against gas stations.

And while Macron's opponents have lost this particular battle—he successfully shepherded the labor law changes through Parliament

over the summer—there's a lot more that they're preparing to oppose.

CGT and other unions want retirees to strike back against planned pensions reforms; Macron wants to increase social charges used to fund healthcare and welfare. "We don't intend to wait until the pension reform proposals to act," said Fabrice Angei, a senior CGT official. "We need to put an end to the destruction of our social model."

"This second phase is going to take longer than the current one," Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said last week of the planned reforms. "Behind these reforms isn't only the desire to relaunch the economy," he said. "It's about our collective ability to be a country that acts decisively."



Macron to Bring French Public Spending to Lowest in 10 Years

By Mark Deen @MarkJDeen

More stories by Mark Deen

3 minutes

September 19, 2017, 6:24 AM EDT

- Tax take in 2018 will be least since 2010, government says
- Deficit figures slightly better than government's forecasts

President Emmanuel Macron's administration plans to cut French public spending to its lowest level since the start of the financial crisis next year and squeeze the tax take to its lowest since 2010 as part of a strategy to remake the economy and revive the nation's standing in Europe.

Government expenditure will fall to 53.9 percent of output in 2018 and the tax revenue will decline to 44.3 percent, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said Tuesday. France's budget deficit will amount to 2.9 percent of gross domestic product in

2017 and 2.6 percent next year, with other sources of revenue such as dividends from state companies supplementing income from taxes.

As his labor market reform comes into force on Friday, Macron is pressing ahead with changes that the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund have been recommending for years. French public spending peaked at 57.3 percent of GDP in 2015, falling to 57 percent in 2016.

"This is a bit better than we had indicated," Le Maire said Tuesday

on France 2 TV. "We're the developed country with the highest public spending," he said, adding that the government's goal is to squeeze spending to just over 50 percent of GDP by the end of its mandate.

French public sector unions have scheduled a strike for Oct. 10.

Before it's here, it's on the Bloomberg Terminal. LEARN MORE

Breitbart : French University Suspends All Courses Due To Migrant Squatters

by Chris Tomlinson 19 Sep 2017 405

3-4 minutes

FRANCOIS NASCIMBENI/AFP/Getty Images

19 Sep, 2017 19 Sep, 2017

The University of Reims Champagne-Ardennes has suspended all courses due to security concerns after around 40 migrants began to squat on the campus only days after classes began.

President of the university Guillaume Gellé wrote a letter to the student population on Sunday saying: "Access to the university premises located on the Red Cross campus is forbidden until security conditions are restored."

Gellé told local media that the security situation also extended to the migrants themselves as he noted there were children amongst them, *L'Express* reports.

The 40 migrants, some of which are families, came to the university campus in north-east France after being kicked out of the Saint John Perse park where they had formed a makeshift migrant camp less than a mile from the campus.

The French student union UNEF has demanded that the local government assign homes to the migrants. A press release on the union's Facebook page reads: "We call on the local authorities, the town hall of Reims, the prefecture to urgently shelter these families."

So far, authorities have not commented on the issue and

classes remain closed "indefinitely" at the university.

This photo taken on September 18, 2017, shows tent shelters installed by a group of migrants on the campus of the University of Reims in Reims, northeastern France. (Photo: FRANCOIS NASCIMBENI/AFP/Getty Images)

Makeshift migrant camps have been a problem in France since the formation of the infamous Calais Jungle camp. The Jungle was cleared last year, which led to many migrants heading to places like the French capital of Paris where makeshift camps were set up first near the Stalingrad metro station and then in the vicinity of the Porte De La Chapelle metro station.

Breitbart London spoke to migrants in Paris earlier this year who blamed the west for their situation. Many of

the migrants claimed to have come from Africa, with some saying they had only been in France for several months.

Though the Jungle has officially been cleared, more and more migrants have been coming back to the port town of Calais in recent months in hopes of illegally entering the UK. The French Interior Ministry has estimated that there have been over 17,000 attempts to sneak across to Britain this year alone.

The numbers have increased so much that the government has been forced to provide sanitation facilities for the migrants and have repurposed an old monastery to house migrants, as well.

Follow Chris Tomlinson on Twitter at @TomlinsonCJ or email at [ctomlinson\(at\)breitbart.com](mailto:ctomlinson(at)breitbart.com)

Variety : France Sends Robin Campillo's 'BPM' to Foreign-Language Oscar Race

Elsa Keslassy

2 minutes

Robin Campillo's sprawling AIDS activist drama "BPM (Beats Per Minute)" has been chosen to represent France in the foreign-language Oscar category.

"BPM" world premiered at Cannes Film Festival, where it earned widespread critical acclaim and won the Grand Prize from the jury which was presided over by Pedro

Almodovar. Represented in international markets and co-produced by Playtime, "BPM" was acquired by U.S. distribution company The Orchard at Cannes.

A topical film which is both universal and deeply rooted in French society, "BPM" has been sold worldwide to mainstream distributors and is meant to reach audiences well beyond the niche audience for LGBT films.

"BPM" marked Campillo's first foray into Cannes's competition and

proved one of the best received films of the festival's 70th edition.

Variety's Guy Lodge called the film a "sprawling, thrilling, finally heart-bursting group portrait of Parisian AIDS activists in the early 1990s... and a rare and invaluable non-American view of the global health crisis that decimated, among others,

the gay community in the looming shadow of the 21st century."

Lodge argued in his review that "BPM" delivered a "hot-blooded counter to the more polite strain of political engagement present in such prestige AIDS dramas as 'Philadelphia' and 'Dallas Buyers Club.'"

"BPM" was produced by Hugues Charbonneau and Marie-Ange Luciani at Paris-based outfit Les Films de Pierre, in co-production with France 3 Cinéma, Page 114, Memento Films Production (which will distribute in France) and Playtime (previously named Films Distribution).

Variety : Warner Bros. Signs First-Look Deal with France's Marvelous Productions

Elsa Keslassy

2 minutes

PARIS – Warner Bros. has signed a first-look deal with Marvelous Productions, the Paris-based outfit launched at Cannes by former top-level execs at Pathé, Romain Le Grand and Vivien Aslanian and producer Marco Pacchioni.

Under the pact, Warner Bros. will have the

opportunity to board any French-language project produced or co-produced by Marvelous Productions. The agreement underscores the Hollywood studio's aim to increase its footprint in local production with strong partners.

"We have a deep respect for the talent and professionalism of the founders of Marvelous Productions, and we are convinced of their ability to deliver quality films that have a wide appeal," said Iris Knobloch, president of Warner Bros. France.

Over the last few years, Warners Bros. has backed several French movies, most notably Michel Hazanavicius's Oscar-winning film "The Artist" (pictured).

Le Grand and Aslanian were at the helm of Pathé for 19 years before exiting in 2016. Together, they produced and distributed many franchise-based French comedies, such as "Les Tuches" and "Camping," as well as "Back to Mom" and "One Man and His Cow," which were all highly successful at

the local box office. Pacchioni produced "Alone in Berlin" with Emma Thompson, Brendan Gleeson and Daniel Bruhl, and co-produced Virginie Despentes's "Bye Bye Blondie" with Emmanuelle Beart.

Marvelous Productions will be producing and co-producing content for film, TV and web formats. The outfit's first slate will soon be unveiled.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

U.K. Considers Arming More Police

Amanda Coletta

6-7 minutes

Sept. 18, 2017 5:30 a.m. ET

LONDON—In a police station in a crime-plagued South London district, Sgt. Guy Mantoura recently sent his night-duty officers off on their beats with batons, incapacitating spray, handcuffs and six Tasers. In a tradition many see as quintessentially British, none was issued a gun.

But after five terrorist attacks in seven months, along with a recent rise in crime, pressure is increasing on police in tradition-bound Britain to reassess their 188-year-old policy of not routinely arming officers, except in Northern Ireland.

The National Police Chiefs' Council, which is responsible for coordinating national police operations, announced in July it was conducting an unprecedented review of the country's armed response to terrorism. In England and Wales, only 5% of police officers carry firearms.

In the past, opposition to arming police officers has come from the officers themselves, who have argued they don't need guns because tough restrictions limited the circulation of legal and illegal guns.

But that is changing. London's Metropolitan Police says the number of guns being smuggled into the

U.K. is "worrying," and there are fears terrorists might use them to carry out marauding attacks. Only 6% of Metropolitan Police officers surveyed in January by their union said the number of armed officers was adequate.

"There is a much stronger movement for arming the ordinary bobby than I can ever remember," said Clive Emsley, a professor of history and criminology at the Open University. One factor likely animating that shift was the fatal stabbing of unarmed police Constable Keith Palmer as he stopped terrorist Khalid Masood from entering the Parliament buildings in March.

Senior police officials say they have foiled six terrorist plots since then in what they have described as a "summer like no other." But driving home the persistence of the threat, a homemade bomb exploded on a packed subway train in southwest London on Friday, injuring more than two dozen people.

In the police station in Peckham, a South London neighborhood with some of the U.K.'s highest violent-crime rates, Constable Damon Blackman endorses the rethink. A police medic trained to carry a Taser, he responded to the June 3 terrorist attack at London Bridge that left eight people dead. He said he believed more lives could have been saved if the first responders had been able to shoot the attackers before they rampaged through nearby Borough Market.

"If you're dealing with someone with a knife, [Tasers don't] give the same level of security as a firearm," Mr. Blackman said.

His colleague Constable Lorcan Searson, however, said arming police could hurt relations with the public.

"I've been in a few fights and I've never really felt like I needed a gun," he said as he patrolled a neighborhood street dotted with fried-chicken joints and barber shops in a police cruiser. Moments later, he and his partner responded to a request for backup at a street skirmish between two families over an allegation of domestic violence. Without the use of guns, the officers took 10 minutes to calm the situation, arresting one man.

"You can talk 98% of the people down," Mr. Searson said.

An independent review in 2016 of London's preparedness for a major terrorist attack noted that cities such as Paris and Brussels suffered attacks despite the prevalence of gun-carrying officers. And even if it was possible to put heavily armed officers on the streets, the review concluded, it wouldn't be reassuring to the public.

Few in Britain believe it makes sense to arm every officer. Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick, London's top cop, said after the London Bridge attack that routine arming was neither sensible nor practical.

But she has been open to the possibility of more armed officers on London streets. She has asked the government for more resources, arguing that ordinary bobbies are being diverted from basic policing to deal with what she called a "shift in the terror threat."

Last year, the government committed £144 million (\$191 million) to increase the number of armed officers by 1,500 in the wake of the Paris attacks, but they haven't all yet been recruited. Some police officials believe this increase is insufficient in any case. After the bombing outside an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester in May and again last week after the subway bombing, the government deployed the army onto British streets to support armed police officers.

Police forces in the U.K. wouldn't need approval from the government or a change in law to increase the number of armed officers. But many complain their forces have been whittled to the bone by public spending curbs since 2010, and would need government cash to procure guns and put officers through the lengthy training process to use them.

At the Red Bus Shop, a souvenir shop on the Thames not far from London Bridge, owner Margo Balfour said she discussed the issue with police officers on patrol in the area after the June attacks. Three of the four agreed with her that officers should carry guns, she said.

"I wouldn't want it to be the way that it is in America, but I do think it's a good idea," she said, questioning whether a 19th-century policy fits

21st-century risks.

"It's very sad that it has to be like this and it would be better if it wasn't," Ms. Balfour added. "But the

times have changed and you have to move with the times."

Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition as 'Britain Weighs Arming More Police.'

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Theresa May Finds Threats to Her Brexit Vision Within Her Own Cabinet

Jenny Gross
6-8 minutes

Sept. 18, 2017 1:55 p.m. ET

LONDON—As Brexit negotiations hit a critical juncture, Prime Minister Theresa May is finding some of her biggest adversaries are in London, not Brussels.

Mrs. May is struggling to quell dissension from cabinet ministers as she prepares to deliver a major policy speech on Britain's departure from the European Union, underscoring her tenuous position after a failed election gamble in June left her without a majority in Parliament.

Boris Johnson, Britain's colorful and unpredictable foreign secretary, over the weekend outlined his own vision, undercutting Mrs. May ahead of her closely watched speech in Florence—her first on Brexit in six months—and fueling speculation he is positioning himself to succeed her.

In a 4,000-word piece in the Daily Telegraph, Mr. Johnson said Britain "will succeed mightily" outside the bloc. He made no mention of a transitional period in which EU rules would continue to apply and revived a discredited referendum promise that a post-Brexit Britain would be able to spend £350 million (\$475 million) more a week on its public health-care system.

Just as the cabinet had coalesced around the idea of a transitional period, Mr. Johnson's intervention underscored the pressure Mrs. May still faces from a Conservative Party contingent that says she should be more uncompromising.

"Boris is Boris," Mrs. May said Monday when asked about Mr. Johnson's article. "This government is driven from the front and we are all going to the same destination because we are all agreed," she told reporters on a flight to Canada, which she is visiting for a day before the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York.

Mrs. May's cabinet, however, includes ministers on both sides of the Brexit debate, and senior officials have clashed over immigration policy and access to the EU's single market.

The divisions are prolonging uncertainty about what the government wants, said Anand Menon, professor of European politics at King's College London.

"Trying to keep the cabinet together when it is profoundly split in all directions is simply delaying the problem rather than solving it," Mr. Menon said. "This is the moment where she has to say 'This is what I want from the Brexit negotiations, if you don't like it, sod it and get out of my government.'"

He said Mr. Johnson's article, where he laid out his position on issues beyond his foreign-policy remit such as taxes and health care, suggests he is jockeying for Mrs. May's job in the long term.

Mr. Johnson challenged Mrs. May's plans on several fronts. While he said the U.K. shouldn't pay for access to the single market and customs union, Mrs. May hasn't ruled out such payments. Mr. Johnson said much of the £350 million a week some Brexit campaigners have said would be reclaimed from the EU should be spent on the National Health Service, while Mrs. May has avoided

questions on the amount of savings and how it would be allocated.

David Norgrove, chairman of the U.K. statistics watchdog, on Sunday wrote in a letter to Mr. Johnson that he was "surprised and disappointed" he used the figure.

"It is a clear misuse of official statistics," Mr. Norgrove said. The figure, widely used by the Leave campaign in the run-up to the referendum, doesn't take into account a substantial U.K. rebate that never leaves the U.K. Treasury he said, as well as payments from the EU to the U.K.

In 2017, Britain's contribution to the EU was £16.9 billion, but after taking the rebate and other factors into account, the net outflow was £8.1 billion, U.K. government figures show.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd told the British Broadcasting Corp. on Sunday that Mr. Johnson was "back seat driving." Vince Cable, the leader of the pro-EU Liberal Democrats Party, on Monday told the BBC Mrs. May was like a headmaster "barricaded in her own office."

Downing Street only found out about Mr. Johnson's article hours before it was published Friday night, an aide to Mrs. May said, but added that concerns were limited as the piece had nothing surprising in it and Mr. Johnson's position backed Mrs. May's.

Mr. Johnson denies he is laying the groundwork for a leadership bid. Over the weekend, he reiterated his support for Mrs. May, saying he was looking forward to her speech in Florence, a city she chose because of its cultural and economic ties to the U.K.

"All behind Theresa for a glorious Brexit," Mr. Johnson wrote on Twitter after his piece was published. In the Telegraph piece he said Brexit would help Britain become "the greatest country on earth."

Mr. Johnson, once one of the most popular Conservative politicians, fell out of favor after the EU referendum, when he faced accusations that he only supported Brexit to advance his political career. He was in the running last year to succeed former Prime Minister David Cameron, but withdrew after a close ally, then-Justice Minister Michael Gove, decided at the last minute to go for the job himself, saying he had lost confidence in Mr. Johnson.

Mrs. May appointed Mr. Johnson as foreign secretary when she became prime minister last year, in what some lawmakers said was a strategic bid to keep him on her side as she navigates Brexit.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, a pro-Brexit Conservative lawmaker, said there was no appetite within the party for a leadership change, which would take away focus from Brexit negotiations.

But he said Mr. Johnson's vision was a refreshing break from what he considers Mrs. May's tepid rhetoric. "We've heard they're going to deliver Brexit because that's what the country told us to do, but not why this is something we should be enthusiastic about," he said.

Write to Jenny Gross at jenny.gross@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition as 'U.K. Foreign Secretary Tests Prime Minister's Brexit Plans.'

The Washington Post

As the German election approaches, refugees wonder about their role in politics

<https://www.facebook.com/griff.witte>
9-11 minutes

DRESDEN, Germany — Two years ago, Khaled Tabanja was on the refugee trail, in desperate flight from his native Syria before finding safety in Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel opened the country's doors to Tabanja and more than a million others.

Today, the 26-year-old is on the campaign trail, arguing to anyone who will listen in this once-annihilated, now elegantly revived east German city that voters should choose Merkel's opponent in elections on Sunday.

Having left a country where participation in politics can get you arrested, tortured or killed, he is still coming to terms with his newfound freedom.

"You can't even compare. Here there's democracy," said Tabanja — slim, hip, soft-spoken and still in the process of learning German. "Even if you can't vote, you can say whatever you want. Even if you're a refugee, you can be active in politics."

But few are. In a campaign that has made refugees the subject of heated debate — much of it acridly negative — the approximately 1.4 million asylum seekers who have come to

Germany since its last election four years ago are rarely heard from. Khaled Tabanja, 26, came to Germany from his native Syria. He volunteers for the center-left Social Democrats ahead of German elections later this month and gives talks to fellow refugees about why they should support the party. (Griff Witte/The Washington Post)

Lacking citizenship, ineligible to vote and still struggling to find their place in a new land after leaving countries

where the tension between autocratic leaders and oppressed citizens devolved into war, many say they have no appetite for politics or don't feel welcome.

[Hundreds of churches are trying to shelter refugees as police attempt to deport them]

Yet the question of whether the newcomers ultimately engage in German democracy could help determine whether they successfully integrate into society or remain consigned to the margins. Experts say that without an active political role, the wave of arrivals that swept Europe in late 2015 and early 2016 could be relegated to a long-term status as second-tier Germans.

That is true for previous generations of immigrants, who have long been underrepresented on the voting rolls, in party membership and among elected officials, said Tim Müller, a social scientist at the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research.

Beginning in the 1960s, he said, Germany invited guest workers from Turkey and across southern Europe to fill a void in the labor market.

But thinking they would be here only temporarily, the state did little to make them feel they were part of German society. Decades later, Germany continues to struggle with how to integrate them — a pattern that officials insist cannot be repeated.

"We now have the chance to learn from the mistakes of the past," said Dirk Hilbert, Dresden's mayor. German Chancellor Angela Merkel campaigns in Freiburg, southwestern Germany, on Sept. 18. (Patrick Seeger/AFP/Getty Images)

This time, he said, policymakers have focused on ensuring that asylum seekers learn German, get jobs and avoid clustering in immigrant ghettos in particular cities, neighborhoods or buildings.

He also said they receive an education in the basics of German civics.

But in Müller's view, it's not strong enough, and little attention has been paid to drawing

refugees into German democracy.

"The debate has focused on: 'How can we make sure that many of them will leave when the crisis is over?'" he said. "It's not, 'How can we make them citizens?'"

[In Germany, Merkel welcomed hundreds of thousands of refugees. Now many are suing her government.]

The tone of this year's election campaign has hardly been an enticement for the newcomers to get involved, with refugees discussed more as a threat or a burden than as an opportunity for an aging country that needs workers and youth.

While Merkel has defended her decision to allow the refugees to come, she has also said Germany will not be accepting large numbers of new arrivals again any time soon. She and her chief rival, Social Democratic Party (SPD) candidate Martin Schulz, agree that the pace of deportations needs to be accelerated among those whose asylum claims have been denied.

The party in third place, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), says that even those with legitimate asylum claims should be sent back, in part because the predominantly Muslim newcomers do not fit into German culture.

"I don't think that people from Islamic countries are willing to integrate themselves and contribute to society here," said Anka Willms, an AfD candidate in Dresden.

The party frequently uses incendiary rhetoric to attack immigrants and their descendants; the party's deputy leader, Alexander Gauland, recently suggested that Aydan Ozoguz, the integration minister and one of the few nationally known politicians with an immigrant background, should be "disposed of" in Turkey.

In Tabanja's new home town, Dresden, the political climate for refugees has been particularly hostile.

[Germany has stopped caring about Brexit, and 4 other global stories]

Every Monday for the past three years, the anti-Muslim, anti-

immigrant group Pegida has rallied in the city's center. The demonstrations once drew tens of thousands; they're now down to about 1,500, but they still reflect the depth of animosity among some in the city and the surrounding Saxon countryside.

Tabanja is aware of those sentiments. But he has also experienced a different side of Germany's response to refugees, one that inspired his political activism.

Soon after Tabanja's arrival in Germany after fleeing Syria, he and his partner were harassed for being gay by fellow asylum seekers at their shelter. Following pleas for help from authorities, they escaped via a red-haired German woman in her late 50s who took them into her rural home and told them they could stay.

It was a week before Tabanja learned that the woman was a prominent Social Democratic politician and the integration minister in the German state of Saxony.

"It was an emergency," the minister, Petra Köpping, recalled of the decision she and her husband made to take in the two men. "There wasn't much time."

Tabanja, who was used to hiding his sexual orientation from his family and the public, was surprised when he carefully told Köpping that his friend was his boyfriend, and she told him she already knew and that it was okay.

"He couldn't imagine that it's normal for us. He kept asking, 'Really?'"

The first few nights at their new home, Tabanja and his partner barely went outside, worried about how they would be seen and treated by neighbors. But when Köpping invited them to come to political events run by her party, Tabanja decided to join.

When not working as a waiter or taking German lessons, he now volunteers for the SPD, working in its offices, handing out fliers and talking to fellow refugees about why he chose the party.

For Tabanja, it comes down to two issues: the SPD is supportive of

refugees, and it backs gay rights, including the same-sex marriage bill that passed the German Parliament this summer.

But he stresses that he is not against Merkel, who is still revered among some refugees for allowing them into Germany and whose Christian Democrats (CDU) are the overwhelming favorite to come out on top in the Sept. 24 vote.

At a recent meeting of gay refugees in Dresden, Tabanja — his dark hair neatly coifed and his jeans artfully torn — stood beside a rainbow-flag-draped table and made his case for the SPD. Refugees, he said, should get involved in politics, even if they cannot vote, because their future in the country is at stake.

He also sought to assuage anxieties about what it means to be an opposition party in Germany, a concept that has no parallel in despotically governed Syria.

"Sometimes the SPD agrees with the CDU, and sometimes they don't," he said. "They're just different."

After half an hour of Tabanja's gentle persuasion, some said they remained skeptical of politicians and their promises. "We're told we have all these rights here," said Souha Triki, a 20-year-old Tunisian who has been unable to secure asylum protection. "But we don't."

Today's Headlines newsletter

The day's most important stories.

Rabih, a burly Lebanese refugee who did not want his last name used because some of his family members do not know he is gay, said he was far more interested in "fun, music and enjoying life" in his adopted home than getting involved with the messy business of politics.

But having heard Tabanja's pitch, he said he would heed it out of gratitude to the country that had given him a fresh start.

"Germany," he said, "opened her arms for us."



Editorial : What Germany Wants Isn't What Europe Needs

by The Editors
More stories by

Photographer: Sean Gallup/Getty Images

The Editors

4-5 minutes

Pondering her next move.

If polls are correct, Angela Merkel is on track to win a record fourth term as German chancellor on Sept. 24. The temptation, after such a long run of electoral success, is to keep the formula unchanged and carry on giving the voters what they want.

The trouble is, what makes sense for Germany and its people isn't quite what's needed by the European Union as a whole.

Germans want stability and prosperity, and they have both. But the German model, combined with the economic rigidity of Europe's single-currency system, isn't

conducive to the success of the rest of the EU.

There's no disputing Germany's success. Its economy, Europe's biggest, has shrugged off the recession and is growing well; exports are up despite the strong euro; and the government's budget is in surplus. But in a single-

currency area, Germany's very success is a problem for many other EU countries. If they were to emulate German economic policy in every respect, they could do as well -- but that is asking a lot. Wholesale reform of labor markets, fiscal policy and other economic institutions won't come easily -- and in the meantime, differences in competitiveness cannot be regulated through currency realignment.

As a result, sound economic policy for the EU as a whole requires Germany to bear some of the adjustment burden. Recalling the enormous benefit that the euro has conferred on its own export-centric economy only underlines the point. Closer integration and larger fiscal transfers are part of the answer. Yet

Germany's voters aren't willing to accept these costs of economic leadership.

Merkel needs to change their minds. She has backed the idea of a European Monetary Fund to provide financial assistance during crises, but she has resisted more ambitious plans, advanced by French President Emmanuel Macron, for a common euro-zone budget and other forms of closer economic integration. Merkel was unlikely to speak up for such measures before the election; afterward is a different matter. Germany shouldn't claim it wants a unified, growth-oriented and economically stable Europe and then shirk its essential role in bringing this about.

To be sure, the burdens of leadership aren't confined to economics. Germany and Europe face the biggest foreign policy challenges since the Cold War. Donald Trump is testing relations with the U.S. to destruction; the U.K. is leaving the union; the EU's friendship with Turkey is breaking down; Russia looks more threatening than it has been for years; and populist, euroskeptic governments flouting EU rules pose yet another threat to European stability. German leadership will be indispensable on each and every front.

If it wants to lead, Germany can no longer be content with success at home. That success, in any case, rests on Europe's long-term vitality. Merkel needs to take ownership of

Europe's prospects. That's the ambition Germany embraced through its commitment to ever closer union -- and then made real by adopting the single currency.

If the chancellor is returned to power, she needs to broaden Germany's idea of its place in the world and be willing to make the hard choices that follow.

--Editors: Therese Raphael, Clive Crook.

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

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**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL**

Mead : Winning Again Is Angela Merkel's Easiest Task

Walter Russell
Mead

5-6 minutes

Sept. 18, 2017 6:49 p.m. ET

Berlin

As Sunday's German election approaches, sighs of relief can be heard across Europe. When much of the world seems to be spinning out of control, Germany remains reassuringly dull, plodding soberly along in the usual way. Angela Merkel is all but certain to return for a fourth term as chancellor. Although many votes remain undecided, her Christian Democrats (and their Bavarian allies, the Christian Social Union) have a healthy lead. The only question appears to be whether Mrs. Merkel will renew her coalition with the center-left Social Democrats or turn to smaller parties in its place.

The European Union establishment—shaken by Brexit, staggered by Donald Trump, challenged by Russia, and worried about the rise of populist and nationalist parties around the Continent—wants stability above all, and Germany seems to be the only country that can keep Europe on an even keel.

This is a major historical shift. From the rise of Bismarck in the 1860s through World War II, Germany kept

European politics on the boil. As recently as 1990, both British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and French President François Mitterrand tried to stop unification in its tracks. Unable to block it, Mitterrand insisted that Germany bind itself to the rest of Europe by giving up the deutsche mark for the euro. Then-Chancellor Helmut Kohl agreed and promised to build a "European Germany" rather than a "German Europe."

A generation later, Thatcher and Mitterrand might feel their fears were justified. Politically and economically, Germany has become the most powerful and successful EU member state: In today's Europe, all roads lead to Berlin. Yet as nervous as Germany's strength makes some of its neighbors, the real question is whether Berlin can meet the expectations they are placing on it. Germany might look relatively strong, prosperous and stable, but the world may be expecting more from Berlin than the Germans are willing or able to give.

The economies of Southern Europe, still struggling with the fallout from the 2008-09 financial crisis, look to Germany for relief. The Baltic states and Poland look to Germany for European leadership against Russia. France wants Germany to accept it as the co-leader of Europe—an ambition that makes countries like Poland and Italy suspicious. German diplomats labor

to pacify the Balkans and take the front line in Europe's growing confrontation with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. EU officials in Brussels look to Germany for leadership in dealing with the legal and political challenges populist governments in Poland and Hungary pose to European institutions. The Trump administration wants Germany to increase military spending, to reduce its trade surplus, and to do more to lead the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Britain wants Germany to ease the path of Brexit.

Chancellor Merkel's fourth term will not be easy. Even if her party, as expected, scores a decisive victory at the polls, she will face serious constraints. The Alternative für Deutschland—a populist, nationalist and anti-euro party—is running third in national polls and seems certain to enter the Bundestag. That would be the first time in postwar German history that a far-right party has been seated in the national legislature. The AfD usually runs strongest in the former East Germany, where many factories closed following unification and wages still lag. But recently the AfD has made inroads in the prosperous west. It now holds seats in the legislatures of 13 of Germany's 16 states.

The danger for Mrs. Merkel and the German political establishment is that issues like migration and reform

of the eurozone trigger the kind of populist backlash that feeds antiestablishment parties like AfD and Die Linke, successor to the East German Communist Party.

The economic outlook is also mixed. Looking ahead, it is not clear how long the old manufacturing economy can continue to underwrite German success. The automobile industry faces disruptive changes with an impending shift toward electric and autonomous vehicles. China continues to move up the value chain, increasingly looking to compete for the high-value-added precision work over which German industry has long reigned supreme. Automation will continue to put pressure on manufacturing employment, even in Germany. And with protectionist winds blowing world-wide, Germany's export-oriented economic model may struggle to repeat past success.

Mitterrand and Thatcher opposed German reunification because they feared a rich and powerful Germany would dominate Europe. Today, their successors must hope that Germany remains both powerful and rich enough to lead. The alternatives are grim.

Mr. Mead is a fellow at the Hudson Institute and a professor of foreign affairs at Bard College.

Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition as 'Winning Again Is Merkel's Easiest Task.'

INTERNATIONAL

French president will try to persuade Trump to remain in Iran deal, reconsider Paris climate exit (online)

https://www.facebook.com/anne.gearan
6-8 minutes

President Trump met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Sept. 18. During the brief photo-op, Trump declined to discuss what issues were on the agenda for their meeting. President Trump met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Sept. 18. (Reuters)

President Trump met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Sept. 18. During the brief photo-op, Trump declined to discuss what issues were on the agenda for their meeting. (Reuters)

France's top diplomat warned against withdrawal from global engagement "out of fear or selfishness" and said French President Emmanuel Macron will try to persuade President Trump to remain a party to the international nuclear deal with Iran when the two leaders meet later Monday.

France will also renew the case for Trump to reconsider his decision to pull out of the Paris climate accord, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told reporters.

"There is a worrying degradation of the world environment," Le Drian said, referring to a host of conflicts and terrorism, but also by implication to the rise of the kind of populism or nationalism that helped elect Trump. "Despite globalization, cooperation has become less easy," Le Drian said through an interpreter.

Without mentioning Trump by name during his opening remarks, Le Drian lamented an "increasing breakdown of international cooperation" and "withdrawal out of fear or selfishness."

When asked about the U.S. leader and Macron's meeting with him, Le Drian said France will stress the value of the Iran deal for nuclear nonproliferation and international security. He suggested that France may be open to an extension of nuclear limits on Iran past 2025, one of the main demands of critics of the deal.

"I'll try to convince President Trump," that the deal can be rigorously enforced now, Le Drian said. Even if a follow-on deal or other changes are contemplated, "we need to acknowledge the validity of the agreement as it is."

[U.S. and Iran accuse one another of backsliding on nuclear deal]

If Trump moves to pull away from the deal by failing to certify to Congress that Iran is complying, other parties to the deal will carry on, Le Drian said.

"Today there is nothing to allow us to believe it will not be implemented. It's essential," he said.

President Trump said that Iran is not in compliance with the nuclear deal while speaking in Bedminster N.J. on Aug. 10. Trump says Iran is not in compliance with nuclear deal (The Washington Post)

President Trump said that Iran is not in compliance with the nuclear deal while speaking in Bedminster N.J. on Aug. 10. (The Washington Post)

The Trump administration has twice certified to Congress that Iran was meeting its end of the landmark 2015 bargain that freezes elements of its nuclear development program that could lead to a bomb in return for the lifting of most international sanctions.

Trump has recently said he does not expect to make the same

determination at the next deadline, on Oct. 15, but other U.S. officials have said the decision is not set. A statement that Iran is not complying would set off a congressional review of whether to reimpose some U.S. sanctions, which could sunder the deal.

Earlier Monday, the U.S. administration warned that Washington could leave the deal if it finds that the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency has not been rigorous enough in enforcing it.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry read the warning at a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

Trump, in the message read by Perry, suggested that the United States's continued participation in the deal could depend on International Atomic Energy Agency access to Iranian military sites that Iran has declared off-limits.

"We will not accept a weakly enforced or inadequately monitored deal," the Associated Press quoted Perry as saying.

Iran could abandon its nuclear agreement with world powers "within hours" if the United States imposes any more new sanctions, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Aug. 15. Iran could abandon its nuclear agreement with world powers "within hours" if the United States imposes any more new sanctions. (Reuters)

Iran could abandon its nuclear agreement with world powers "within hours" if the United States imposes any more new sanctions, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Aug. 15. (Reuters)

Iranian nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi urged the agency and its head, Yukiya Amano, to "resist such unacceptable demands," and said

the deal is in danger not from Iranian compliance but from "the American administration's hostile attitude," the AP reported.

The IAEA has said Iran is complying.

[McMaster says no redo on Paris climate deal]

Macron's meeting with Trump comes one day after administration officials failed to clear up confusion over whether Trump may be looking for ways to remain engaged in the Paris climate accord, a nonbinding but historic agreement to limit global carbon emissions.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

White House national security adviser H.R. McMaster had said Sunday that the decision to leave the pact was final, although Trump remains open to the potential for a different deal. But Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Trump might reconsider if the terms of the Paris climate deal were changed now. That is unlikely.

Le Drian said Macron will stress the universal threat of climate change.

"We consider that this agreement needs to be implemented, and it will be," Le Drian said. "We have heard the declarations made by President Trump and his intention not to respect the agreement, and we can only hope to convince him in the long run."

Trump said in June that he would begin the three-year process of exiting the compact, which he called unfair to the United States.



Trump and Macron take spotlight at UN but challenges are key

By edith m. lederer, associated press

UNITED NATIONS — Sep 19, 2017, 4:14 AM ET

President Donald Trump shakes hands with French President Emmanuel Macron during a meeting at the Palace Hotel during the United Nations General Assembly, Monday, Sept. 18, 2017, in New York. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci).

U.S. President Donald Trump and French leader Emmanuel Macron are expected to take the spotlight at the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations — but it's the tough global challenges from the nuclear threat in North Korea and the plight of Myanmar's minority Muslims to the spread of terrorism and the impact of climate change that will dominate discussions.

The six-day meeting opens Tuesday morning with a state-of-the-world speech by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. He is

making his debut at the General Assembly ministerial session along with the American and French leaders.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian set a somber tone for the meeting, telling reporters Monday that dissension and conflict are at their highest levels since the Cold War and that cooperation among nations has become more difficult in a world that is more interdependent than ever.

What is worse, Le Drian said, is that some countries are increasingly

questioning the role of working together, "and with a temptation of withdrawal out of fear or selfishness." He gave no examples but appeared to be pointing to growing nationalism in the United States and some European countries.

Many world leaders, concerned about America's priorities and role in the world, will get their first chance to hear and meet Trump. He is scheduled to speak after Guterres and Brazil's president, who for more than 35 years has been the first

leader to address the 193-member General Assembly.

Brazilian President Michel Temer, charged last week with obstruction of justice and leading a criminal organization, flew to New York on Monday to continue the tradition, according to his office.

Other key speakers on Tuesday are Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, whose country has been accused by a group of Arab nations including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates of supporting terrorist groups — an allegation Qatar

denies. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are also scheduled to address the assembly.

Guterres has called North Korea "the most dangerous crisis that we face today," and while Trump and Macron will grab headlines it's the next steps in dealing with Pyongyang leader Kim Jong Un's relentless pursuit of nuclear weapons that will be watched most closely.

Not far behind on the list of issues needing urgent international

attention is the plight of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims, victims of what Guterres calls a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" that has driven nearly 400,000 to flee into Bangladesh over the past three weeks.

The secretary-general said a third major challenge is climate change.

On Monday night, the eve of the ministerial meeting, the second Category 5 hurricane in a month hit the Caribbean, with the small island of Dominica the first landfall for Hurricane Maria. Earlier in the day, Guterres and top government officials from several countries

devastated by the other Category 5 storm, Hurricane Irma, addressed a hastily called U.N. meeting and appealed for help to rebuild following that storm's destruction.

Guterres called this year's hurricane season "the most violent on record" and warned that extreme weather linked to climate change is having an impact all over the world, "including floods in southern Asia and landslides and droughts in Africa."

**The
New York
Times**

Trump Envisions a Parade Showing Off American Military Might

Michael D. Shear
5-7 minutes

Mr. Trump has seemed taken by the idea of a military parade since the early days of his presidency.

His inaugural committee reportedly explored, but rejected, the idea of highlighting military equipment in his inaugural parade. In an interview in January, just days before he took his oath of office, he told a Washington Post reporter that "we're going to show the people as we build up our military, we're going to display our military. That military may come marching down Pennsylvania Avenue."

Months later, in an interview with The New York Times in the Oval Office, the president called the Bastille Day event "one of the most beautiful parades I have ever seen" and said that "we should do one day down Pennsylvania Ave."

"I've always thought of that," he said. "I've thought of it long before."

But the president's comments on Monday suggested that he has moved beyond musing about the idea of a display of America's military power. In lengthy comments, he said that his administration had already begun planning for the event, perhaps as early as next year.

"We're looking forward to doing that," Mr. Trump said, adding that he had spoken to his chief of staff, John F. Kelly, a retired Marine, and others about beginning the planning process. "We'll see if we can do it this year. But we certainly will be beginning to do that."

Mr. Trump attended the Bastille Day Parade in Paris in July at the invitation of Mr. Macron. Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

It would not be the first time modern military hardware has been wheeled down Pennsylvania Avenue. Pershing and Nike missiles were part of John F. Kennedy's inaugural celebration, recalled Michael Beschloss, a presidential historian, though Kennedy generally disliked military parades.

But for the most part during the Cold War, Mr. Beschloss said, big displays of military might were seen as a sign of weakness because they mimicked the Soviet Union.

"If the message is: 'I want to express how much I honor our military,' that's a wonderful thing," Mr. Beschloss said. "If the idea is to mimic other countries' military might, I don't think that's a great idea."

If the president gets his wish this Fourth of July, it will be the first major military parade down the streets of Washington in more than 25 years. In 1991, President George Bush hosted a similar demonstration of military prowess after the end of the Persian Gulf war.

Gulf War 1991 National Victory Celebration Video by balsamwoods

Amphibious assault vehicles and at least one M1 tank were among the 80 pieces of military hardware that rumbled down the city's main street

for the Gulf War National Victory Celebration about three weeks before Independence Day that year. The cost of the parade: more than \$12 million, with about \$7 million coming from federal funds and the rest from private donations.

It is not clear exactly what Mr. Trump has in mind for his parade or who would pay for it.

Many countries use military parades to celebrate their might. North Korea frequently puts on displays of its military hardware, highlighting the rogue nation's missile capabilities by driving them down the streets of Pyongyang on trailers for all to see.

China held a huge military parade two months ago, with President Xi Jinping riding in the parade in an open-topped Jeep. In May, Russian leaders organized a large military parade through Red Square to mark Victory Day, the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany.

And at France's Bastille Day celebration in July, tanks and planes marked not only the storming of the Bastille in 1789 but the 100th anniversary of America's entry into World War I.

"It was military might and I think a tremendous thing for France, for the spirit of France," Mr. Trump said Monday. "We are going to have to try and top it."

President Trump and President Emanuel Macron of France met at the Palace Hotel in New York on Monday. Doug Mills/The New York Times

WASHINGTON — President Trump said on Monday that he was looking into staging a display of American military might in a Fourth of July parade down Pennsylvania Avenue.

In remarks during a meeting with President Emmanuel Macron of France at the United Nations, Mr. Trump said he got the idea after watching the Bastille Day parade in Paris with Mr. Macron in July. During the parade, he could be seen gesticulating and whispering to Mr. Macron at the elaborate display of tanks, soldiers on horseback and military jets flying overhead.

"I came back and one of my early calls were, I think we are going to have to start looking at that ourselves," the president told Mr. Macron. "We are actually thinking about Fourth of July, Pennsylvania Avenue, having a really great parade to show our military strength."

The Bastille Day parade in Paris in July, which President Trump said gave him the idea of staging a display of American might. Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

**The
Washington
Post**

Trump says he wants a massive military parade down Pennsylvania Avenue on July 4 (online)

<https://www.facebook.com/abbydphillip>
4-5 minutes

Trump declined to discuss what issues were on the agenda for their meeting. President Trump met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Sept. 18. (Reuters)

President Trump met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Sept. 18. During the brief photo-op,

Trump declined to discuss what issues were on the agenda for their meeting. (Reuters)

President Trump's trip to France for the country's Bastille Day parade in July left a big impression. So big, in fact, that he wants to replicate the experience back home.

As Trump met Monday with French President Emmanuel Macron, the commander in chief gushed about seeing France's military might on display in the streets of Paris during his visit. And he told reporters he is looking into the possibility of having a parade down the streets of Washington on Independence Day

to show the United States' "military strength."

"I was your guest at Bastille Day, and it was one of the greatest parades I've ever seen," Trump told Macron, who sat next to him. "It was two hours on the button, and it was military might and, I think, a tremendous thing for France and the spirit of France."

"To a large extent because of what I witnessed, we may do something like that on July Fourth in Washington down Pennsylvania Avenue," Trump said.

[Trump revels in French military pomp far from White House turmoil]

The comments prompted laughter from Macron and other officials sitting around them. The leaders

were meeting in New York ahead of the United Nations General Assembly. But it wasn't the first time Trump has talked about wanting a military parade in the streets of Washington.

Before the inauguration, Trump officials inquired with the Pentagon about having armored vehicles participate in his inauguration parade, according to documents obtained by HuffPost. And he told The Washington Post in January that he hoped that during his tenure, U.S. military might would be on display.

"Being a great president has to do with a lot of things, but one of them is being a great cheerleader for the country," Trump said in the January interview. "And we're going to show the people as we build up our

military, we're going to display our military."

"That military may come marching down Pennsylvania Avenue. That military may be flying over New York City and Washington, D.C., for parades. I mean, we're going to be showing our military," he added.

The Daily 202 newsletter

PowerPost's must-read morning briefing for decision-makers.

[How Donald Trump came up with 'Make America Great Again']

Although Trump is deeply unpopular in France, he was invited for the 100th Bastille Day ceremony in Paris by Macron in an effort to strengthen the relationship between the two countries and their new leaders. The lengthy parade

seemed to thrill the president, who has long held a fascination with military force.

On Monday, seated next to Macron, he boasted about the levels of U.S. military spending so far in his term. And he said his goal would be to "try to top" what France did.

"I think we're looking forward to doing that," Trump said. "I'm speaking with General Kelly and with all of the people involved, and we'll see if we can do it this year," he added, referring to Chief of Staff John F. Kelly.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to requests for comment about plans to hold such a parade.



Donald Trump Wants a Military Parade on July 4

Abigail Abrams

2 minutes

President Donald Trump on Monday said he loved France's Bastille Day so much he might bring the idea of a military parade to America as part of a July 4th celebration.

"We're actually thinking about Fourth of July, Pennsylvania Avenue, having a really great parade to show our military strength," Trump told French

President Emmanuel Macron before a bilateral meeting as part of a series of United Nations events this week.

Trump visited France earlier this year during Bastille Day, a July 14 holiday marking the storming of the Bastille prison in 1789. The event is widely considered the beginning of the French Revolution.

The day is a celebration of the country, in some ways similar to American Independence Day, but it

begins with the world's oldest and largest military parade.

"I was your guest at Bastille Day, and it was one of the greatest parades I've ever seen. It was two hours on the button, and it was military might. And I think a tremendous thing for France and for the spirit of France," Trump reminded Macron on Monday. "And people don't know what great warriors they are in France, but you see that and you see all the victories, it was a tremendous thing."

The president added that the spectacle of Bastille Day was directly responsible for his desire to bring such a parade to the U.S.

"To a large extent because of what I witnessed, we may do something like that on July 4th in Washington, down Pennsylvania Avenue," Trump said. "I don't know, we're gonna have to try to top it. But we had a lot of planes going over, we had a lot of military might. It was a really beautiful thing to see."



Trump Says He Wants July 4 Military Parade in Washington

@margarettalev
More stories by Margaret Talev

5-6 minutes

By and

September 18, 2017, 4:09 PM EDT
September 18, 2017, 4:48 PM EDT

- President hopes to 'top' Bastille Day parade he attended
- He's discussed the idea with the White House chief of staff

U.S. First Lady Melania Trump, U.S. President Donald Trump, French President Emmanuel Macron, and French First Lady Brigitte Macron watch the annual Bastille Day military parade in Paris, on July 14, 2017.

Source: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

President Donald Trump mused Monday about holding a French-style military parade in Washington

during the U.S. July Fourth celebration.

Trump raised the idea at the start of a meeting in New York with French President Emmanuel Macron, as he gushed to Macron about the Bastille Day military parade in Paris that Trump attended in July as the French president's guest.

"It was a tremendous day, and to a large extent because of what I witnessed, we may do something like that on July 4th in Washington down Pennsylvania Avenue," Trump said. "We're going to have to try to top it, but we have a lot of planes going over and a lot of military might, and it was really a beautiful thing to see, and representatives from different wars and different uniforms."

Macron rode in the Bastille Day parade standing upright in an open-top military command car, surrounded by hundreds of military guards on horseback. The two-hour spectacle included tanks rolling down the Champs Elysees and helicopters and fighter jets flying overhead.

Trump said he wanted the U.S. to have "a really great parade to show our military strength."

He added that one of his "early calls" after returning to Washington from the Bastille Day celebration was to begin planning for a similar U.S. military parade. Trump already has discussed the idea with White House chief of staff John Kelly, a retired Marine Corps general, the president said.

"We'll see if we can do it this year, but we certainly will be beginning to do that," he said.

Trump had been thinking about large-scale military parades even before his Bastille Day visit to France, mentioning the idea in an interview published in the Washington Post in January before his inauguration.

"Being a great president has to do with a lot of things, but one of them is being a great cheerleader for the country," Trump told the Washington Post. "And we're going to show the people as we build up our military, we're going to display our military."

"That military may come marching down Pennsylvania Avenue. That military may be flying over New York City and Washington, D.C., for parades. I mean, we're going to be showing our military," he added.

The centerpieces of the Fourth of July celebration in Washington typically are a fireworks display and a concert on the National Mall. Many parades in Washington include military elements, though they are usually limited to companies of soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines marching on foot or riding on horseback.

While military parades are a staple in countries such as France, Russia, China and India, they are rarer in the U.S. The last major military parade in Washington was in 1991 to mark the end of the first Persian Gulf War and included troops, tanks and other armored vehicles. General Norman Schwarzkopf, who commanded U.S. forces in the war, led the parade.

— *With assistance by Gregory Viscusi*

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Bloomberg



France's Bastille Day inspires Trump to hold military parade

By Mark Moore
1-2 minutes

... thing to see" that he's thinking of holding a similar parade in Washington as a salute to the US military.

something like that on July Fourth in Washington down Pennsylvania Avenue. I don't know if we'll have to try to top it ... but it was a beautiful thing to see."

"We're actually thinking about that ... having a really great parade to show our military strength," Trump said.

President Trump said France's Bastille Day celebration that he attended in July with French President Emmanuel Macron was such a "beautiful

"It was a tremendous thing for France and for the spirit of France," Trump said during a news conference Monday with Macron at a New York hotel during the United Nations annual gathering. "Because of what I witnessed we may do

The president said he immediately reached out to his administration when he returned home from the Paris extravaganza to see about setting one up as early as next year in the capital.



Trump considering holding DC military parade on July 4th

Carter
2-3 minutes

Brand on "military might" on display in Paris for Bastille Day and said seeing the parade inspired him to do something similar in the U.S.

for you, because we're friends," Trump told Macron.

Pentagon officials expressed reluctance about the plan, and Trump inauguration officials ultimately scrapped the plan.

President Trump on Monday told French President Emmanuel Macron he is considering having a massive military parade in Washington, D.C., on Independence Day after watching the Bastille Day celebrations on a recent trip to France.

"Because of what I witnessed, we may do something like that on July 4th in Washington down Pennsylvania [Avenue]," Trump said. "We're thinking ... of having a really great parade, to show our military strength."

The Washington Post reported in July that Trump "eagerly" watched the Bastille Day parade, standing and applauding soliders as they marched past the viewing area where he watched with Macron, his wife and first lady Melania Trump.

"They were legit thinking Red Square/North Korea-style parade," an inauguration team source told The Huffington Post.

In remarks alongside Macron during a New York trip to the United Nations, Trump marveled at the

Trump also noted that the U.S. spent over \$700 billion on military spending this year.

Trump previously expressed an interest in including military vehicles in his inaugural parade. The Huffington Post reported in March that emails were exchanged between the Presidential Inaugural Committee and Pentagon officials asking for photographs of "military tactical vehicles" that could be used.

Five military flyovers were planned — one for each branch of the armed services — for the inaugural parade, but all were canceled due to poor weather.



Trump continues 'bromance' with France's Macron

President Trump met Monday with French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

After reminiscing during the meeting about how much he enjoyed watching France's military parade while in Paris on Bastille Day, Trump also said that he is considering having an armed forces parade in Washington on the Fourth of July to showcase the nation's military might.

John F. Kelly, a retired Marine general.

Brian Hook of the State Department, who sat in on the meeting, said the president shared his concerns about Iran with Macron, and that the leaders discussed working together to address Iran's missile and nuclear program and destabilizing activities.

Trump tweeted after the meeting that it was "a great honor" to spend time with Macron, with whom Trump is known to share a close connection.

Trump said he has discussed the parade idea with his chief of staff,

In typical Trump fashion, the president said he wants the parade to be bigger and better than the one he saw in France.

The leaders also spoke about the need to prevent Iran from establishing any deep roots or organizing in Syria, Hook said.



Trump Reaches Out to U.N., Criticizes Waste, in Debut Appearance

5-6 minutes

Paul McLeary | 1 hour ago

included dignitaries from 10 nations, including senior representatives from Britain, Senegal, and Uruguay.

McMaster, and John F. Kelly, the White House chief of staff. Rex Tillerson, the U.S. secretary of state, did not attend.

work together and champion truly bold reforms, the United Nations will emerge as a stronger, more effective, more just, and greater force for peace and harmony in the world," Trump said.

President Donald Trump offered the United Nations his highest form of flattery, telling U.N. Secretary General António Guterres and other foreign leaders Monday that he recognized the U.N.'s potential value more than 15 years ago — when he decided to build a luxury residential high rise across the street.

The president delivers his first U.N. address Tuesday. Which version of Trump will show up—the bully or the dealmaker?

The event provided foreign delegations with their first glimpse of the American leader on the U.N. stage, and it offered a preview of his much-anticipated debut address to the 193-nation U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday morning.

The U.S. president also prodded the U.N. body to cut back on waste and bureaucracy, though some

"It was only for the reason that the United Nations was here that that turned out to be such a successful project," Trump told a gathering that

Trump's plug of the Trump World Tower building came in his first appearance at the United Nations, an organization he heartily criticized on the campaign trail. His comments came at the opening of high-level meeting he hosted in support of the U.N. chief's proposals to reform the organization. He was accompanied by his U.N. envoy, Nikki Haley, his national security advisor, H.R.

For his part, Trump was on his best behavior, sticking closely to his written text, warmly patting the U.N. chief on the arm and praising his leadership. "You have been fantastic," he said.

U.N. officials suspected he may have inflated numbers on the extent of the U.N.'s hiring practices

"We pledge to be partners in your work, and I'm confident that if we

U.N. officials suspected he may have inflated numbers on the extent of the U.N.'s hiring practices, claiming that the U.N. workforce has doubled since 2000. In the past 10 years at least, U.N. staffing levels at headquarters have actually

declined, from 10,085 listed in the 2008-2009 budget to 9,998 projected for the 2018-2019 budgets. U.N. staff levels around the globe have also fallen recently from 42,887 in 2012 to 40,131 in 2016. "It caused some head scratching," said one official who closely tracks the U.N. budget.

And he revived a perennial pet peeve of American conservatives, complaining that as the largest donor, the United States covers too much of the U.N. financial burden. Washington is billed for about 22 percent of the U.N.'s regular budget and more than 28 percent of its peacekeeping budget.

"We must ensure that no one and no member states shoulders a disproportionate share of the

burden, and that's military or financial," he said.

Guterres echoed the president's reform concerns, saying: "Someone recently asked what keeps me up at night. My answer was simple: bureaucracy."

"Someone out to undermine the U.N. could not have come up with a better way to do it than by imposing some of the rules we have created ourselves," he added.

Shortly after the meeting, Trump traveled to the New York Palace Hotel for meetings with French President Emmanuel Macron and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Trump said he is pushing "very hard" to achieve peace between

Israelis and Palestinians. "We are giving it an absolute go. I think there's a good chance of it happening," he said.

For foreign delegates, the criticism was far milder than they expected from a man who regularly denounced the United Nations and multilateral diplomacy in his presidential campaign.

But it was insufficient to paper over the deep divisions between the U.S. president and the rest of the U.N. membership over issues like climate change, Iran, and North Korea.

Speaking to reporters Monday morning, France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, warned that a U.S. withdrawal from the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal would spark a nuclear arms race in the region.

"It is essential to prevent a spiral of proliferation that would encourage hardliners in Iran to pursue nuclear weapons," he said.

The top French diplomat also appeared to take a veiled swipe at Trump, and his retreat from multilateral diplomacy.

"There is a worrying degradation of the international environment," he said, citing the mushrooming of conflicts. "Despite globalization, cooperation has become less easy with increasing questioning of the role of the multilateral game and with a temptation of withdrawal out of fear or selfishness."

Photo credit: LUDOVIC MARIN/AFP/Getty Images

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

7-9 minutes

Trump to Push Nationalist Policy at U.N. (UNE)

Farnaz Fassih and Eli Stokols

Sept. 18, 2017 9:00 p.m. ET

UNITED NATIONS—President Donald Trump's first address to the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday will lay out a foreign policy rooted in his view of nationalism and sovereignty and anchored by "America First" principles, according to a senior White House official.

Mr. Trump will call for more burden sharing and cooperation among countries on issues including the fight on terrorism, North Korea's nuclear and military threat, and Iran's adherence to a multinational nuclear deal.

He will also mention reforms at the U.N. and the role countries play in enabling North Korea's regime, though it wasn't clear whether Mr. Trump will blame specific nations for keeping Pyongyang's economy afloat despite global sanctions. He is expected also to address the crisis in Venezuela.

The address will combine the nationalistic theme of his campaign with an appeal to the nationalism of other countries as a new basis for international cooperation, the senior official said.

"It will be a foreign policy that is driven by outcomes, not by ideologies," the official said. "What the president is doing is explaining how the principle of America First is not only consistent with the goal of international cooperation, but a rational basis for every country to engage in cooperation."

The official said Mr. Trump dedicated considerable time to drafting, developing and fine-tuning his speech with his advisers because he viewed Tuesday's address as "an incredible moment and an enormous opportunity to demonstrate U.S. leadership and U.S. values."

Mr. Trump's speech will be delivered with the use of a Teleprompter—although he is best known for speaking informally and off the cuff—in an effort to convincingly present a foreign-policy doctrine.

Mr. Trump also will air a frequent grievance of his that the U.S. is shouldering too much of the financial and military burden as a global leader. He will call on Tuesday for more participation from other countries in the defining battles of the early 21st century, echoing themes of his campaign rallies and previous foreign-policy speeches.

In his first international address as president, in June in Saudi Arabia, Mr. Trump called on the Muslim world to join the U.S. and other countries in the fight against terrorism, echoing a theme voiced by his predecessors. A month later, in Warsaw, the president attempted to rally Europe to defend "the West" and its civilization, asking pointedly: "Do we have the confidence in our values to defend them at any cost?"

Mr. Trump's speech will be closely watched by world leaders as well as diplomats and U.N. officials looking to gauge Washington's policies under an administration that has kept countries guessing on whether the U.S. will honor or abandon the Iran deal, or pursue diplomatic or military options on North Korea.

On some issues, such as pressuring North Korea and combating terrorism, Mr. Trump has the support and sympathy of the international community, and thus more leeway to push for the U.S. agenda. On other issues, such as the Iran nuclear deal and climate change, he faces stern opposition and pushback for demanding changes to previous agreements.

"The [Iran nuclear] agreement is solid and we will make sure the agreement is strictly implemented," French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told reporters Monday morning in New York, adding that so far there had been no indications of a breach by Iran.

Mr. Trump will share the world stage on Tuesday with French President Emmanuel Macron, who is expected to praise the Iran deal and the Paris Climate Agreement as successes of international diplomacy.

Mr. Macron may end up being seen as the anti-isolationist and anti-nationalist leader of the West during the General Assembly this week, with Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel absent this year because of elections at home.

Also absent this year are other prominent leaders who typically would speak on the General Assembly's first day, such as Russia's President Vladimir Putin and China's President Xi Jinping.

Despite possible differences in views among leaders, analysts said what Mr. Trump says matters simply because he is the U.S. president.

"They [world leaders] will look for Trump to balance the rhetoric with some statements making a case for international cooperation," said Richard Gowan, an expert on the

U.N. at the European Council on Foreign Relations. "What Trump can do is say, 'You help me with North Korea and U.N. costs and I will stick with this organization.' As long as he gives that pitch, a large number of diplomats and politicians will be relatively happy."

Mr. Trump pressed his case on the cost of U.S. support for the international organization on Monday while chairing a meeting of more than 100 international leaders. He called on the U.N. to "focus more on people and less on bureaucracy," in comments during the meeting of international officials as the annual General Assembly gathering got under way.

The "ways of the past," he said, are "not working."

"We must ensure that no one and no member state shoulders a disproportionate share of the burden, and that's militarily and financially," Mr. Trump said. His remarks were similar to those made by previous U.S. leaders.

Mr. Trump was accompanied at the event by U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who also stands to come under the spotlight this week at her first General Assembly as the U.S. envoy to the U.N. She has emerged as an important foreign-policy figure in the Trump administration and often has been the first to voice Washington's policies on global issues including Syria's war, North Korea and Iran, frequently overshadowing Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

"She is a very influential voice in the administration," a Security Council diplomat said, adding that during negotiations over tougher sanctions on North Korea, Ms. Haley

projected the impression that she was driving North Korea policy.

Mr. Trump on Monday also met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying the two continue pressing for Middle East peace.



Trump visits UN: As a global leader, can the US do more with less?

The Christian Science Monitor

8-10 minutes

September 18, 2017 United Nations, New York—President Trump has already shaken the post-World War II global order by pulling the United States out of American-led international pacts like the Paris Climate Accords and the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal – and by threatening to dump others, like the Iran nuclear deal.

He has cast doubt on longstanding US-led alliances like NATO and those covering Northeast Asia, recently blasting US trade arrangements with South Korea even as the two allies take on the building bellicosity of North Korea.

And his administration has called for a nearly one-third reduction in State Department and foreign-aid spending, a cut many see as unavoidably limiting America's diplomatic reach and influence.

Now this week, the US is participating in the world's biggest annual diplomatic event, the opening of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, with roughly half the delegation of senior diplomats and foreign-policy advisers brought by past administrations.

And that poses a fundamental question: In the realm of global leadership, can the Trump administration do more with less?

For many in the community of 193 UN member states who have been anticipating General Assembly week to see for themselves how Mr. Trump intends to meld his nationalist policies with America's global role, the impression may be that of the incredible shrinking superpower.

Senior administration officials contend it is nothing of the sort, that the US will demonstrate this week how it intends to lead the world while strengthening the nation first and being more efficient.

The many dozens of world leaders assembling in New York "are going to find out we are going to be solid, we're going to be strong," the US

"I think there's a good chance that it could happen," Mr. Trump said. "Historically, people say it can't happen. I say it can happen."

The U.S. and Israeli leaders both have criticized the 2015 international nuclear agreement with Iran, though Mr. Trump

ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, told reporters at a White House press conference Friday. "No one is going to grip and grin, the United States is going to work."

But for others, the US retrenchment at the world's preeminent diplomatic gathering is further evidence of what a key Senate committee last week denigrated as "the administration's apparent doctrine of retreat."

Trump will be in New York for four days, and will deliver on Tuesday a much-anticipated speech outlining US global priorities. By tradition, the US president speaks third, after the UN secretary-general and the president of Brazil.

For many, the reduced cadre of US diplomats and specialists in a wide range of international issues will be at least as important in cementing global impressions of US intentions under Trump.

"What looks like a significant downsizing of the US presence will have a considerable signaling implication," says Sheba Crocker, who served as the assistant secretary of State for international organization affairs in the Obama administration. "It's sending a clear signal that the US is not playing the same role it has played traditionally and throughout many decades of multilateral diplomacy and engagement."

Reshaping alliances

Noting that the smaller US presence at the UN comes after months of other actions suggesting a reduced US diplomatic profile, Ms. Crocker, now vice-president for humanitarian policy and action at CARE USA, says, "I suspect this is being seen around the world as further evidence that the US is pulling back from the leadership role it has traditionally played on the world stage and in driving the global conversation."

Indeed, the UN week downsizing is likely to confirm the view among many leaders of other countries that it is time to look more to other powers for leadership, other former US diplomats say. Foreign leaders "already ... have begun to reshape alliances and reconfigure the global networks that make up the global

wouldn't say in response to a question whether he intends to withdraw from the agreement.

"You'll see very soon," Mr. Trump said.

—Emre Peker contributed to this article.

economy, bypassing the United States and diminishing its standing," writes Elliott Cohen, a senior State Department official in the administration of President George W. Bush, in the October issue of *The Atlantic*.

What Mr. Cohen sees as the "withering" of "high-level diplomatic contact" in an administration that has yet to nominate many critical undersecretaries of state or ambassadors is likely to accelerate with fewer of those top diplomats attending the UN opening session.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who is orchestrating his department's reorganization and ordered the UN presence downsizing, is doing both in the name of cost-cutting and efficiency. His aides say US diplomacy at the UN will be just a "robust" as ever.

"Some folks like to focus on the overall size of the footprint," Mr. Tillerson's spokeswoman, Heather Nauert, told journalists last week. "The secretary firmly believes coming out of the private sector that we all need to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars," she said, adding, "Have you checked [New York] hotel rates?"

Even advocates of a broad and, yes, expensive US diplomatic presence at the UN acknowledge that efforts to rein in bloat can be necessary.

"It's always fair to raise questions about delegation size, sometimes trimming around the edges can make sense," says Crocker, who organized President Obama's high-level meetings on strengthening UN peacekeeping during the UN week in 2015, and then last year on addressing the refugee crisis.

Where to find efficiency

Others note that using UN week right can actually enhance the kind of efficiency Tillerson is trying to encourage.

"I don't think every senior official needs a large entourage, and sometimes the US delegations to UN meetings can get unnecessarily large, but on the other hand, it's very important to have the senior officials focused on the many issues of importance to the US

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participating in New York," says Kristen Silverberg, who served as assistant secretary of State for international organization affairs in President Bush's second term.

"For me, the week in New York was always one of the most productive of the year," she adds. "All of your colleagues are there from every part of the world, so it can be a very effective time."

Indeed, Ms. Silverberg says she saw many times when key officials heading up Bush's priority international initiatives – such as the Darfur humanitarian crisis and the Africa AIDS and malaria program – were able to organize impactful meetings with foreign colleagues in New York without undertaking expensive overseas travel.

Others say the reduced US delegation at what is referred to simply as "UNGA" – the UN General Assembly opening – sends another message to the world.

"If your idea of diplomacy is building and sustaining relationships to serve and further US interests over a wide range of issues from global security to nuclear proliferation and international development, then having a large number of diplomats to build those relationships is important," says Michael Doyle, director of Columbia University's Global Policy Initiative.

"But reducing that range and participation of diplomats further systemizes the transactional element of Trump foreign policy," adds Dr. Doyle, who served as a special adviser to former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. "If you're only really interested in the transactional, as seems to be the case in the world of Secretary Tillerson, then you don't need all these seasoned diplomats," he adds. "The deal of the week does not require a large delegation."

Trump's national security advisers note that the president and Vice President Mike Pence will take full advantage of the global leadership's presence. Trump joined UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Monday in convening a high-level meeting on UN reform.

Filling the void?

The president's speech Tuesday will tout US global engagement and review what the US sees as the world's pressing priorities.

"I personally think he slaps the right people, hugs the right people, and he comes out with the US being very strong in the end," Ambassador Haley said in advance of Trump's speech.

**The
Washington
Post**

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

8-10 minutes

President Trump on Monday listens to a question during a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Palace Hotel in New York. (Evan Vucci/AP)

NEW YORK — President Trump on Tuesday will present a vision of U.S. engagement with the world in a maiden address to the United Nations that aides said will be consistent with the nation's "values and traditions" but will not focus on advancing democracy abroad.

This dichotomy of a U.S. leader pledging to shape global conditions to ensure America's prosperity and security without explicitly promoting its way of life is expected to distinguish Trump's speech from those of his White House forebears.

The president's nationalist agenda has led to widespread anxiety among the U.S. allies and partners who have gathered here this week among the more than 150 foreign delegations at the 72nd U.N. General Assembly. Amid mounting global challenges, foreign leaders are carefully watching Trump's moment on the world stage for signals about his willingness to maintain the United States' traditional leadership role.

Although Trump campaigned on a policy of putting "America first" and spoke dismissively of international bodies such as the United Nations and NATO, he has offered a tentative embrace of them as he seeks to rally international support to confront destabilizing threats from North Korea, Iran and the Islamic State.

Trump began several days of diplomacy at the United Nations with a session Monday devoted to reforming the institution — a theme during his outsider presidential campaign and a key demand of some of his conservative supporters. The focus on reducing bureaucracy lent a critical tone to Trump's debut. Thailand's Foreign

Minister Don Pramudwinai, left, and President Trump shake hands while British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, second from right, and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres greet each other before a session about reforming the United Nations at the U.N. headquarters in New York City. (Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images)

But others caution that any sense of US withdrawal from its global leadership role can prompt others to begin maneuvering to fill the void. Indeed, Mr. Cohen says, China is already responding accordingly.

Trump to lay out vision of U.S. role in the world, focusing on 'outcomes, not ideology' (UNE)

Minister Don Pramudwinai, left, and President Trump shake hands while British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, second from right, and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres greet each other before a session about reforming the United Nations at the U.N. headquarters in New York City. (Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images)

In brief opening remarks, he said the United Nations had not lived up to its billing upon its creation in 1945, asserting that it suffered from a bloated bureaucracy and "mismanagement." Trump urged his fellow leaders to make reforms aimed at "changing business as usual," but pledged that his administration would be "partners in your work."

"Make the United Nations great," the president told reporters when asked about his message this week, riffing off his campaign slogan. "Not again. Make the United Nations great. Such tremendous potential, and I think we'll be able to do this."

White House aides said the address would be consistent with Trump's foreign policy speeches this year in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where he challenged other nations to do more in the global fight against terrorism, and in Warsaw, where he warned that Western civilization was under attack.

President Barack Obama used his final U.N. address last year to urge his peers to continue to embrace the multilateral cooperation that had marked the post-World War II era, and to warn of a global retreat into "tribalism" and "building walls" — an implicit reference to Trump just weeks before the 2016 presidential election. Trump campaigned on a pledge to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and to curtail immigration.

In the vast U.N. chambers, Trump will give a "clear-eyed" view of the challenges facing the international community and offer a path that is based on "outcomes, not ideology," said a senior administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the president's speech.

someone else decide what the agenda of the week would be," says Silverberg, now managing director of the Institute of International Finance in Washington.

"If there's a vacuum, if the US is stepping back, then other countries are going to fill it," says Crocker. "And what we've learned from experience is that the countries

stepping in don't always have the same aims and priorities the US has — and has been able to keep the world focused on because of our leadership on the international stage."

Trump, as he has before, intends to emphasize the need for other nations to take up more of the burden of providing for their own prosperity and security, rather than relying on the United States.

"It's a shared risk," the administration official said. "Nations cannot be bystanders to history." The aide added that Trump "will talk about the need to work toward common goals. But he will not tell them how to live. He will not tell them what system of government to have. He will ask countries to respect the sovereignty of other nations. That's the rationale for the basis of cooperation."

Foreign leaders have sought to influence Trump this week on a range of issues.

Trump's first meeting with a world leader here was with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a choice meant to underscore the U.S. commitment to Israel and displeasure at what U.S. officials see as systemic anti-Israel bias at the United Nations.

It was also a nod to the open question of U.S. participation in the U.N.-backed nuclear deal with Iran — one of the most pressing issues hanging over the session this year. Netanyahu, who will also address the gathering Tuesday, opposes the international deal and lobbied hard against it during the Obama administration.

"When we look at the agreement, we have reservations," Israel's U.N. ambassador, Danny Danon, said in an interview. "We should not be the one who will tell our allies what to do and how to do, but we have some hand-on experience."

Trump, whose administration faces an Oct. 15 deadline to certify whether Tehran has complied with the agreement, said last week that Iran had violated the "spirit" of the deal by supporting terrorism in the Middle East. A statement that Iran is not complying would set off a congressional review of whether to reimpose some U.S. sanctions, which could under the deal.

The president believes the deal is "deeply flawed," said Brian Hook, a State Department official who accompanied Trump in his meetings with foreign leaders Monday. Trump told his foreign counterparts "what he thinks are the shortcomings," Hook said.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who will address the United Nations on Wednesday, told CNN that a U.S. withdrawal would harm American credibility.

"Exiting such an agreement would carry a high cost," Rouhani said.

The White House said Trump spoke by phone Monday with Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is not attending the U.N. meetings, to discuss North Korea's efforts to "destabilize" Northeast Asia with its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

Today's Headlines newsletter

The day's most important stories.

Ahead of the meetings, U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley lauded the United Nations for a pair of recent votes to enact severe economic sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The sanctions seek to cut off oil imports to the regime of Kim Jong Un — who Trump recently dubbed "Rocket Man" — and block exports from the country.

In another bilateral session Monday, French President Emmanuel Macron pressed Trump to keep the United States in the Paris climate accord. Trump, who told him the deal imposed oppressive regulatory burdens on American businesses, has vowed to withdraw the United States from the agreement at the earliest opportunity, in 2020.

"There is a worrying degradation of the world environment," French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said at a news conference. Without mentioning Trump by name, Le Drian lamented an "increasing breakdown of international cooperation" and "withdrawal out of fear or selfishness."

Yet as Trump sat down with Macron, he reflected fondly on his official trip to Paris in July to watch a Bastille Day military parade down

the Champs-Élysées. This, the president ruminated, would be an import from abroad that has his support.

"It was a tremendous thing," Trump said. "And to a large extent, because of what I witnessed, we may do something like that on July

Fourth in Washington, down Pennsylvania Avenue. . . . We're going to have to try and top it."

The New York Times Trump Soft-Soaps the U.N. Of Course, It Was Only Day 1 (UNE)

Peter Baker and Somini Sengupta

8-10 minutes

Trump: 'Mismanagement' Hinders United Nations

President Trump opened his visit to the United Nations by saying it had grown too bureaucratic.

By REUTERS on September 18, 2017. Photo by Doug Mills/The New York Times. Watch in Times Video »

UNITED NATIONS — The polished and protocol-obsessed diplomats of the United Nations hardly knew what to expect when President Trump arrived at their citadel along the East River on Monday for the first time since taking office. But this was not it.

Instead of a tiger, they got a tabby. Mr. Trump, the apostle of America First who has heaped scorn on global institutions, ripped up international agreements and quarreled even with allies, offered a subdued and largely friendly performance on the opening day of his inaugural visit to the United Nations.

He praised Secretary General António Guterres for tackling mismanagement and bureaucracy. He complimented the United Nations — and himself — by boasting that he made the right decision to build a high-rise tower opposite its headquarters. Even his Twitter feed hewed closely to the sort of scripted lines his predecessors might have used: "great week ahead," "looking forward to meeting," "productive first day." He came, he saw, he gripped and grinned.

"We pledge to be partners in your work," Mr. Trump told a room full of world leaders as he embraced an effort to overhaul the organization. "And I am confident that if we work together and champion truly bold reforms, the United Nations will emerge as a stronger, more effective, more just and greater force for peace and harmony in the world."

But if the most undiplomatic of modern presidents avoided a confrontation on Day 1, it may have only been to soften up the crowd for a tougher message on Tuesday when he addresses the General Assembly. In a speech drafted by

his hard-line policy adviser, Stephen Miller, Mr. Trump plans to challenge the world to do more to counter threats from Iran and North Korea.

"It appears that he left out the anti-U. N. rhetoric he was so fond of during the campaign and instead recognized the potential of the U.N. to be involved in solving global crises and with an important role to play," said Rachel Stohl, a scholar at the Stimson Center, a nonpartisan research organization. By Tuesday, she said, "I would expect him to play to his base a bit and call for greater action with regards to Iran and North Korea."

While he has made a few international trips as president, this is Mr. Trump's first experience with such a varying collection of world leaders — with vastly different issues — all at once. His first overseas trip started off smoothly with largely on-message stops in Saudi Arabia and Israel, only to generate a furor later in the week when he went to Europe and refused to explicitly endorse NATO's commitment to mutual defense.

"The president is not one to pull punches," said Suzanne Nossel, executive director of PEN America, a human rights group, and a former State Department official under Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.

Ms. Nossel said Mr. Trump seemed to be "at an inflection point with his political base" and might feel pressure to lash out. "I hope he resists the temptation to treat the U.N. as a punching bag in order to please conservatives as they witness him waver on other hot-button issues," she said.

The president started his day meeting with counterparts about overhauling the United Nations. He complained that its spending and staff had grown enormously but that "we are not seeing the results in line with this investment."

Still, his criticism was mild compared with the bombast of the past. As recently as December, he dismissed the United Nations as "just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time" and as president he had yet to meet with Mr. Guterres.

A "family photo" during the United Nations meeting on Monday. Doug Mills/The New York Times

On Monday, he commended the secretary general for seeking "to focus more on people and less on bureaucracy." He added: "We seek a United Nations that regains the trust of the people around the world. In order to achieve this, the United Nations must hold every level of management accountable, protect whistle-blowers and focus on results rather than on process."

Mr. Trump said any reform should ensure that no member "shoulders a disproportionate share of the burden, and that's militarily or financially," a nod to conservatives who bristle at the United Nations costs borne by the United States. Mr. Trump said nothing about whether he would pursue his proposal to radically cut American funding for the organization.

The event, organized by Mr. Trump's envoy to the United Nations, Nikki R. Haley, was part of a still-vague effort to revamp the United Nations system. Her blueprint contains proposals that have been circulated for years. Its significance lies in its support for the United Nations' very existence rather than a bludgeoning of it, and Ms. Haley said 128 countries had backed it so far.

"It was a good day for Nikki Haley" and Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, the president's national security adviser, said Bruce Jones, a scholar at the Brookings Institution. "They pulled off an effective alignment between Trump's priority — namely better burden sharing — and U.N. reform."

Mr. Jones said it was also "a good day" for Mr. Guterres "as the threatened rift between Trump and U.N. was bridged," then noted: "Tomorrow comes the pressure — on Iran and North Korea."

Mr. Trump later met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, in the first of a string of sessions he will conduct with counterparts during four days in New York. Mr. Netanyahu pressed Mr. Trump to either revise the Iran nuclear agreement negotiated by Mr. Obama or scrap it.

Asked by reporters if he would withdraw, Mr. Trump said: "You'll see very soon. You'll be seeing very soon." He added: "We're talking about it constantly. Constantly."

The president later met with President Emmanuel Macron of France and the two called each

other by their first names as they traded warm words and recalled Mr. Trump's visit to a Bastille Day military parade in Paris in July. They saved disagreement over the climate accord until the cameras were off. Mr. Trump then hosted a dinner with Latin American leaders, where he assailed Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro, for "stealing power" from the people and wrecking the economy.

"Our goal must be to help them and restore their democracy," he said.

Mr. Trump's main message will come on Tuesday when he addresses the General Assembly. Aides have said he will seek to explain how his America First approach squares with a robust international body with the argument that nations that pursue their own interests can come together for common causes.

The address will offer challenges for a president whose most animated public speeches feed off a lively crowd response. In the setting of the United Nations, where words are translated into multiple languages to an audience from varied cultures, jokes and casual references generally do not work.

President George W. Bush often said it was "like speaking to the wax museum — no one moves." Tony Blair, the former British prime minister, told a forum hosted by the Concordia Summit on Monday that his United Nations speeches were the toughest of his career.

Mr. Trump's attempt at a joke on Monday seemed to elude some of the foreign leaders in the room. He cited his days as a real estate developer and his decision to build Trump World Tower opposite the organization's headquarters, a building where several foreign diplomats working at the United Nations have their official residences.

"I actually saw great potential right across the street, to be honest with you," he said, "and it was only for the reason that the United Nations was here that that turned out to be such a successful project."

Breitbart : Trump to Defend 'America First,' Emphasize Importance of Sovereignty in U.N. Speech

by Adam Shaw 18 Sep 2017 247

4 minutes

BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/Getty Images

18 Sep, 2017 18 Sep, 2017

President Trump is expected to go global with his campaign cry of "America First" in his address to the United Nations General Assembly Tuesday, in which he will emphasize the importance of national sovereignty as the basis for mutual international cooperation, a senior White House official said Monday.

Such a speech would mark a return by Trump to the foreign policy outlook that helped him blitz the Republican presidential primaries and win the White House in November. The Trump administration has been making nods towards a more globalist foreign policy in recent weeks, with an increased presence in Afghanistan and with administration officials

appearing to wobble on the U.S. exit from the Paris climate deal.

But the official told reporters Monday that his speech will not just defend "America First" but also appeal to sovereignty as the basis for good mutual international cooperation — with Trump set to promote "not a top-down model of global bureaucracy but instead the nation-state as the best vehicle for the elevation of the human condition."

National security adviser H.R. McMaster had indicated Friday that Trump's address would also feature a heavy emphasis on sovereignty.

"Sovereignty and accountability are the essential foundations of peace and prosperity," McMaster said at the White House press briefing. "America respects the sovereignty of other countries, expects other nations to do the same, and urges all governments to be accountable to their citizens."

In his address Tuesday, Trump is also expected to mention international crises such as North

Korea and Iran's nuclear capabilities, and urge other countries to do their part, explaining how burden sharing toward common goals, combined with a defense of common values, is the way forward for the U.N.

Trump used an address Monday to push for wide-ranging reform at the U.N., saying that while it was founded on noble goals, it had become bloated and lost its way.

"Yet in recent years the UN has not reached its full potential because of bureaucracy and mismanagement while the United Nation's regular budget has increased by 140 percent and its staff has more than doubled since 2000," he said. "We are not seeing results in line with this investment."

It is expected that Trump will call for reforms in his speech as well, supporting Secretary-General António Guterres's own reform push in doing so.

Many U.N. officials and agencies have expressed skepticism about Trump's "America First" strategy,

and have been particularly spooked by proposals that would significantly cut U.S. financial contributions to the U.N.

But, the White House official said that Trump will use his address to lay out how "America First" does not indicate a withdrawing from international responsibilities, but is, in fact, a rational basis from which countries can then engage in international cooperation.

Guterres echoed a similar sentiment last week, noting that when he was prime minister of Portugal, it was his job to put Portugal first.

He went on to clarify that "it's my deep belief that the best way to preserve the American interests is to engage positively in global affairs and to engage positively in support to multilateral organizations like the UN."

Adam Shaw is a Breitbart News politics and U.N. reporter based in New York. Follow Adam on Twitter: @AdamShawNY



Besheer

5-7 minutes

UNITED NATIONS —

U.S. President Donald Trump launched into a whirlwind round of bilateral and multilateral discussions Monday at the beginning of his four-day diplomatic marathon in New York for the annual United Nations General Assembly debate, and many meetings on its sidelines.

In his first U.N. appearance Monday morning, a day before the General Assembly session formally opens, Trump presided over a session on reforming the world body and called for bold action to make the 193-member organization "a greater force for peace."

Flanked by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Washington's U.N. ambassador, Nikki Haley, Trump told the diplomats at the reform meeting that the organization does not perform as well as it should, and that bureaucracy was to blame. He said the world body must "not be beholden" to the ways of the past.

Trump's First Day at UN Focuses on Reform, Iran, Climate Change

Peter Heinlein
Margaret

"We seek a United Nations that regains the trust of the people around the world," Trump said. "In order to achieve this, the United Nations must hold every level of management accountable, protect whistleblowers, and focus on results rather than on process."

Officials from more than 120 countries were invited to the U.S.-sponsored meeting after agreeing to a 10-point reform plan initiated by the secretary-general.

"The United Nations must become more nimble, effective, flexible and efficient," Guterres told the meeting. He said the organization's bureaucratic shortcomings keep him awake at night.

One-on-one with Trump

Later in the day, Trump held one-on-one meetings with France's President Emmanuel Macron and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, then had dinner with key Latin American leaders.

Briefing reporters after the two bilateral sessions, the State Department's director of policy planning, Brian Hook, said both dealt primarily with Iran's mischievous role in the greater Middle East.

"One of the things that's common to both ... the French and the Israelis, is this deep and abiding concern about Iran's activities in Syria; and broadly, whether it's in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon," Hook told reporters. "One of the things they discussed was not allowing the 'Lebanization' of Syria."

Asked to explain his term "Lebanization," Hook said: "Iran takes advantage of failed states, and civil wars, and wars generally. It is the kind of environment that is conducive to activating their proxy network, and they are doing that in Syria."

Obama deals unfair to US

The U.S. official said Trump repeatedly voiced concern that the two international deals signed by former President Barack Obama — limiting Iran's nuclear program and pledging to work together with other nations on climate change — were unfair to the United States.

"The president focused repeatedly in (these) meetings on fairness. It was a theme he returned to again and again, that he thought (the Paris climate accord) was badly negotiated," Hook said. "He also thought the Iran deal was badly negotiated."

Asked whether Trump was open to renegotiating terms of the Paris Accord, or to pushing for a another arrangement that he would consider "fair," Hook said only that Trump was looking forward to continuing discussions with Macron.

President Trump is "open," Hook said, "to considering a number of different approaches that properly balance protecting the environment and protecting American workers and promoting economic growth, and not giving an unfair advantage to other countries while America is disadvantaged."

Mauro on Trump's mind

Trump wrapped up his day in talks about the crisis in Venezuela while dining with the presidents of Brazil, Panama and Colombia and the vice president of Argentina.

"The socialist dictatorship of Nicolas Maduro has inflicted terrible misery and suffering on the good people of that country," Trump said during a brief moment open to the press. "This corrupt regime destroyed a thriving nation by imposing an ... ideology that produced poverty and despair everywhere it has been tried."

Which Trump will show up?

Day Two of U.N. week will feature Trump's highly anticipated speech Tuesday to the General Assembly. "Which Trump will show up?" is a question on many lips.

As a candidate, Trump belittled the United Nations, claiming it was "not a friend" of democracy, freedom or "even to the United States of America."

Since he has become president, however, he has said the U.N. has

"tremendous potential" and praised the Security Council's recent votes to stiffen sanctions against North Korea following its nuclear tests and missile launches.

Khalilzad on Trump

Statements about his shifting positions that have often seemed contradictory, confounding many observers and leading to heightened worries both at home and abroad about their effect on

international stability. Zalmay Khalilzad, who served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under President George W. Bush, said it more a question of Trump's unpredictability than contradictory comments, and that cuts both ways.

"A degree of unpredictability with adversaries can be useful," Khalilzad told VOA. "It is said that one of our successful foreign-policy presidents, Richard Nixon, was seen by some of our adversaries as

unpredictable. And that affected their actions."

With allies, however, Khalilzad said that same strategy can breed distrust. "It is important to maintain confidence and to have predictability that we can count on each other," he said. "There's no doubt that when push comes to shove, our friends must know that we're in this together."



Donald Trump Calls for U.N. Reform Before Speech

Associated Press

6-7 minutes

(UNITED NATIONS) — President Donald Trump used his United Nations debut on Monday to prod the international organization to cut its bloated bureaucracy and fulfill its mission. But he pledged U.S. support for the world body he had excoriated as a candidate, and his criticisms were more restrained than in years past.

"In recent years, the United Nations has not reached its full potential due to bureaucracy and mismanagement," Trump said. "We are not seeing the results in line with this investment."

The president urged the U.N. to focus "more on people and less on bureaucracy" and to change "business as usual and not be beholden to ways of the past which were not working." He also suggested the U.S. was paying more than its fair share to keep the New York-based world body operational.

Related

The short remarks at a forum on U.N. reforms were a precursor to Tuesday's main event, when Trump will address the U.N. General Assembly for the first time, a speech nervously awaited by world leaders concerned about what the president's "America first" vision means for the future of the world body.

Trump riffed on his campaign slogan when asked to preview his central message to the General Assembly, saying: "I think the main message is 'make the United Nations great' — not 'again.' 'Make the United Nations great.'"

"Such tremendous potential, and I think we'll be able to do this," he added.

But even as the president chastised the U.N., he pledged that the United States would be "be partners in your work" to make the organization a more effective force for peace across the globe.

He praised the U.N.'s early steps toward reform and made no threats to withdraw U.S. support. The president's more measured tone stood in sharp contrast to the approach he took at NATO's new Brussels headquarters in May, when he scolded member nations for not paying enough and refused to explicitly back its mutual defense pact.

While running for office, Trump had labeled the U.N. as weak and incompetent, and not a friend of either the United States or Israel. But he has softened his message since taking office, telling ambassadors at a White House meeting in April that the U.N. has "tremendous potential."

Trump more recently has praised a pair of unanimous U.N. Security Council votes to tighten sanctions on North Korea over its continued nuclear weapons and ballistic missile tests.

The annual gathering of world leaders opens amid serious concerns about Trump's priorities. For many world leaders, it will be their first chance to take the measure of the president in person.

The president on Monday praised U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who said he shared Trump's vision for a less-wasteful U.N. that will "live up to its full potential." The U.S. has asked member nations to sign a declaration on U.N. reforms, and more than 120 have done so.

True to form, the president also managed to work into his speech a reference to the Trump-branded apartment tower across First Avenue from the U.N.

His speech began a busy week of diplomacy for Trump, who is scheduled to meet separately with more than a dozen world leaders along the sidelines of the U.N. In his first bilateral meeting, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump declared that they "are giving it an absolute go" on Middle East peace talks.

Trump is to meet with the head of the Palestinian Authority later in the week, but the White House has played down prospects for a breakthrough.

U.S. national security adviser H.R. McMaster said "Iran's destabilizing behavior" would be a major focus of those discussions. While seated next to Netanyahu, a vociferous critic of the Iran nuclear deal, Trump declared "you'll see very soon" when asked if the U.S. would stay in the agreement. Netanyahu, for his part, labeled it "a terrible nuclear deal."

Trump and Netanyahu also discussed Iran's "malign activities" in the Middle East and spoke about the need to prevent Iran from establishing any deep roots or organizing in Syria, according to a readout provided by Brian Hook of the State Department.

Related

The threat posed by North Korea was expected to dominate the week's proceedings. Though Chinese President Xi Jinping did not travel to New York, he and Trump spoke by phone about the need to use a recent U.N. Security Council resolution to pressure North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

Trump arrived at the U.N. a few months after announcing that he was withdrawing the U.S. from an international climate agreement — negotiated during the Obama administration and signed by nearly 200 countries — and amid speculation that he might be softening his position.

But Gary Cohn, one of Trump's top economic advisers, reiterated during a meeting with energy ministers that Trump will proceed with the withdrawal plan unless terms more favorable to the U.S. can be negotiated, said a senior White House official. The official insisted on anonymity to discuss details of a private meeting.

Major European powers that support the pact have said it cannot be renegotiated. Trump's meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron included discussion of the agreement, with the U.S. president insisting the original pact was not fair to the United States — though he said he shared the goals of wanting clean air and water.

During his discussion with Macron, Trump also mused about ordering up a military parade down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington to rival the one he witnessed in Paris on Bastille Day.

Trump planned to have dinner later Monday with Latin American leaders.

The United States is the largest contributor to the U.N. budget, reflecting its position as the world's largest economy. It pays 25% of the U.N.'s regular operating budget and over 28% of the separate peacekeeping budget — a level of spending that Trump has complained is unfair. The U.S. has yet to make its payment this year, leading some in the U.N. to be fearful that it may slash its contribution.



Psaki: World leaders, help us out here

Jen Psaki

7-9 minutes

Story highlights

- Jen Psaki: Some advice for world leaders at first Trump meeting at UN:

Press him on North Korea, Iran, climate and human rights

- She says advocate for sensible approaches with the administration, and remind Trump that history is watching

Jen Psaki, a CNN political commentator, was the White House communications director and State Department spokeswoman during the Obama administration. She is vice president of communications and strategy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Follow her at @jrpsaki. The opinions expressed in this commentary are hers.

(CNN) In any year, the UN General Assembly meetings are part "Model UN," with nearly every country in the world sending representatives to a small radius of New York City hotels, and part diplomatic speed dating, where the President of the United States is the hot date.

This last purpose intensifies in a year when there is a new president: The two-week meeting becomes a first chance to get up close and personal with the new leader of the free world.

In 2009, President Barack Obama's presence was met with the same high expectation, and he used his speech in front of the General Assembly to urge the world to come together to address the global threat of climate change. This speech set the stage for the diplomatic work that happened behind the scenes in the years leading up to the Paris climate accord in 2016.

And -- again, behind the scenes -- the United States has used the UNGA as a backdrop for significant diplomatic actions. We did in 2013, when President Obama and President Hassan Rouhani spoke for the first time on the phone, as the Iranian President headed to the airport, and in 2014, when the United States announced the support of a 60-member coalition and the first round of air strikes against ISIS.

But this year, it is clear that at the leader level we simply don't have the capacity or the interest in being the drivers of the global agenda we

once were. We are no longer in the territory of 2016, when President Obama focused his speech on the role of the United States as a force for good.

World leaders, we need you this week. Before I continue, it is important to reiterate that even through this period of our history, America hopes that you do maintain the kind of give-and-take relationship you have had with the American president and his team for decades, through ups and downs in history.

As Americans, we know it is hard to understand the thinking and the strategy of the American president. But you shouldn't spend too much time trying to figure it out. The dirty little secret is sometimes it does not appear there is a strategy.

But it is important to remember that President Trump responds to two things. The first is strength and the second is deal-making. You need to speak to President Trump about how decision-making will affect him, his popularity and his strength.

He has also shown that he respects and values the recommendations of the military. He has shown deference to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and the recommendations of his team.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has not shown an interest in spending as much time as his predecessors actively negotiating or engaging with the world. But he has shown himself to be a voice of reason on some key issues, including the Paris climate agreement and the need for a diplomatic approach to North Korea.

It is hard to tell from the outside how much influence he wields internally, but in him, world leaders, you may find a helpful sounding board.

And there are a few issues where you should focus your attention-- because they are present in our debates in the United States.

First, North Korea. There is no question that this will be a central topic of President Trump's speech Tuesday --and on his mind during

private meetings. Unfortunately, North Korea has provided the best opportunity for Trump and his team to exhibit what they perceive as strength by using fiery rhetoric.

As you well know, military action has never been off the table, but it has also never been the preferred option. We are at the point where we need to know exactly what the Trump administration's plan is behind the scenes. And we could use your help extracting that information. What diplomatic path is the military threat leveraging? Does President Trump understand that China has different objectives from the United States? And what is his "day after" plan if he were to take military action?

Finally, I would recommend reiterating to the President that you know the American military is the best in the world, but that the consequences and fallout of military action could affect the perception of his leadership and his ability to get things done.

Second, the Iran deal.

While President Trump made the decision last week to continue the sanctions waivers

as part of the 2015 nuclear deal, his team may refuse to certify compliance next month, throwing the matter back into the hands of Congress.

He needs to hear that this passive move may sound good on the surface, but the international community is on to him. He will be blamed when the sanctions regime falls apart and Iran is in a position where it is, once again, taking steps toward acquiring a nuclear weapon, out of sight from the global community.

World leaders can and should acknowledge that the deal is not perfect, but also reiterate, having been through the years of negotiations, that there is no better deal to be had. The consequences of this falling apart could amount to a major crisis for the remainder of his presidency.

Third, Paris climate accord.

As you know, there are plenty of advocates for the agreement within the administration and, given that it is not a binding agreement, President Trump's announcement that he would withdraw the US from it has not toppled the deal. But it is worth explaining to him that his decision has given an opening to China to form a closer partnership with the European Union, something China

has wanted to pursue

for some time.

And instead of a position of strength, the decision to back out of the climate accord has removed Trump and his team from the negotiating table, making the United States more of an outlier than a powerful global force led by a powerful agenda-setting president.

If time: Human rights:

Raising human rights and media freedom around the world will, sadly, not be at the top of many of your lists during your visit, but there is an opening to speak out about them -- particularly with a receptive American media -- given the virtual silence of this administration. Becoming a voice on these issues at a time when the United States' President is silent could help position your own voice on the global stage.

In conclusion, take heart. On international issues, Trump's bark has often been stronger than his bite.

UNGA also comes at a critical time for decision-making on North Korea and Iran, specifically. There are a number of officials from both political parties who do not want to see the Iran deal unravel or a war develop with North Korea. We appreciate your help in advocating for sensible approaches with the administration.



Yeo : An invaluable 'club' and Trump should say so

Peter Yeo, Opinion

contributor

6-7 minutes

Other countries share military and humanitarian burdens from Iraq to Africa.

Loading U.N. relief supplies in Bangkok in 2008. (Photo: Pornchai Kittiwongsakul, AFP/Getty Images)

A few weeks before he was inaugurated, Donald Trump tweeted that the United Nations was "just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time."

While that line continues to resurface, what he said as president a few months later warrants equal attention. "We need the member states to come together ... to ensure that no one nation shoulders a disproportionate share of the burden militarily or financially," he said in a speech to U.N. Security Council ambassadors in April. "This is only fair to our taxpayers."

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On Monday, Trump talked about the need for U.N. reform and for other countries to step up and do their fair share. On Tuesday, he'll have another opportunity to share his

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By working through the U.N., the U.S. doesn't have to go it alone.

views on the organization in his first ever address at the U.N. General Assembly.

The U.S. pays \$1.2 billion, about 25% of the U.N. bills. It sounds like a lot, but that's less than a 10th of a percent of our \$4.1 trillion federal budget and a fair assessment based on our share of world gross domestic product. It's a worthwhile investment. By working through the U.N., we can ensure that other nations share the responsibilities of global security and humanitarian relief. The U.S. doesn't have to go it alone.

The U.N.'s actions in Iraq are illustrative. Over the past 15 years, no country has cost more in U.S. blood and treasure than Iraq. Over the last several years, the threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria has occupied much of our national security discussion. What's seldom mentioned in those conversations is the U.N. In partnership with the U.S., the U.N. is involved in countering ISIS and ousting the terrorist group from Iraq.

In Mosul, before the nine-month liberation battle even began, the U.N. helped lead one of the largest managed civilian evacuations in history — almost 1 million people. Now that the battle is over,

the U.N. Development Program, with strong U.S. financial support, has been leading stabilization efforts to ensure that citizens in Mosul and many other areas have access to water, electricity, schools and hospitals. This is a central element of the coordinated effort to keep ISIS out of newly liberated areas and prevent it from again getting a foothold within the country. Via the pooled model inherent to the U.N., this coordinated effort means that for every \$1 the U.S. invests in places like Iraq, others contribute \$9.

The U.N. is not only working with U.S. forces in Iraq, it also deploys U.N. peacekeepers to other global hot spots, which means the U.S. doesn't have to put its own boots on the ground.

One example is in the Central African Republic, where I just saw firsthand the work of the U.N. and its peacekeeping force. This force, like all peacekeeping units, represents true burden-sharing. The U.N. mission in CAR has deployed 12,000 peacekeepers from 49 other countries to prevent mass atrocities and keep yet another country from becoming a terrorist haven.

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POLICING THE USA: A look at race, justice, media

Without the service of these brave men and women, CAR would have slipped into total chaos years ago, disastrously destabilizing an already unstable region. Deploying these troops is also far less expensive than having to utilize our own — studies have shown that a U.N. peacekeeping mission is eight times cheaper to our taxpayers than deploying a U.S. force.

Responding to the growing number of conflicts around the world — from Iraq to CAR — isn't the only way the U.N. is supporting U.S. interests. A massive humanitarian crisis is swelling across Africa, threatening the lives of more than 20 million people. South Sudan, Nigeria, Yemen and Somalia are each facing looming famine.

True to our generous spirit, the U.S. has recognized the importance of doing its part to help these vulnerable millions, providing almost \$1 billion to get food aid to those that need it most. The United Nations has been a key ally in this sprawling fight against starvation — with 13 million people receiving lifesaving aid each month.

In regions controlled by terror groups such as Boko Haram, the

World Food Program is conducting airdrops and trucking supplies to areas where people have fled. Due to coordinated efforts by the U.S., non-profit organizations, donors and the U.N. system, famine has been kept at bay. As Secretary-General Antonio Guterres noted, "This is a reminder that when we act together as united nations, we can make a meaningful difference in people's lives."

The notion of working together as "united nations" is exactly what Trump should stress during his address to the 72nd U.N. General Assembly, because it is directly in line with what he has demanded of the U.N. and the international community. By doing so, we can collectively ensure that no one country has to shoulder the load and that each country pays its fair share. Membership in this type of club is well worth the fee.

Peter Yeo is president of the Better World Campaign and vice president for Public Policy and Advocacy at the United Nations Foundation. Follow him on Twitter: yoyoyeo2.

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Trump at U.N. Talks Up, but Does Not Press, Mideast Peace

Mark Landler
7-9 minutes

President Trump, right, meets with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel at the Palace Hotel in New York, on Monday. Doug Mills/The New York Times

UNITED NATIONS — President Trump will try to play the peacemaker in his first appearance at the United Nations General Assembly this week, but not on the issue that American presidents have historically spent their energy and prestige on at diplomatic gatherings like this.

Rather than seek to revive the moribund peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians — as his predecessor, President Barack Obama, did at his first General Assembly — Mr. Trump is likely to wade back into the internecine feud between Qatar and its Persian Gulf neighbors.

Mr. Trump's focus on the Gulf over the Levant attests to the chronically dismal conditions for an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord, but also to the diminishing role that the peace process plays in the geopolitics of the Middle East and to

this president's other priorities in the region.

"If they want to solve the problem, they've got to get a negotiation going" with the Israeli and Palestinians, said Martin S. Indyk, the special envoy for Mr. Obama's last effort to broker a deal. "Unless Trump is prepared to bang some heads together there's not much for him to do in this situation."

While Mr. Trump has clung to the hope for peace — he raised it again before meeting on Monday with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel — he has put much more time into cementing alliances with the Sunni Muslim kingdoms of the Persian Gulf, as a way of confronting Iran.

That makes the festering squabble in the Gulf a more urgent headache for him than the decades-old enmity between Israelis and Palestinians. Ten days ago, Mr. Trump's effort to settle the dispute, a three-way phone call with the leaders of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, ended in failure.

He is meeting later this week with the Qatari emir, Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, as well as with the Egyptian president, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who is also a party to the dispute. Administration officials said

Mr. Trump was likely to keep trying to close the rift.

"Middle East peace is desirable because it's the mother of all diplomatic deals," said Robert M. Danin, a senior fellow for Middle East studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. "But the conflict that's taking place in the Gulf is harming U.S. interests in a more immediate sense."

The allure of a history-making peace accord is still strong, as Mr. Trump's remarks with Mr. Netanyahu illustrated. While the Israeli leader kept his focus on "the terrible nuclear deal with Iran," Mr. Trump spoke expansively about a peace agreement as though it was a genuine possibility, somewhat to the Israelis' surprise.

"It will be a fantastic achievement," the president said. "We are giving it an absolute go. I think there's a good chance that it could happen. Most people would say there's no chance whatsoever."

But Mr. Trump's enthusiasm bore little resemblance to the actual diplomacy underway here. American officials have gone out of their way to lower expectations for the General Assembly. They do not plan to push either the Israelis or

the Palestinians to meet or to present any new ideas for breaking the deadlock between them. Nor will Mr. Trump bring Mr. Netanyahu together with the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, for a three-way meeting, as Mr. Obama did in September 2009.

"This is very early stages," said Brian H. Hook, senior policy adviser to Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson. "We shouldn't expect major breakthroughs or detailed proposals quite yet."

Mr. Hook said Mr. Trump and Mr. Netanyahu devoted an "equitable" amount of time to the peace process, but much of their conversation had to do with the nuclear deal and how to counter Iran's aggressions in Syria and elsewhere.

In recent days, the United States and Iran have waged a war of words over the nuclear deal, accusing each other of violating it in spirit, if not in practice. Mr. Netanyahu fiercely opposed the agreement and is still stoking opposition to it.

The contrast to Mr. Obama's first General Assembly was vivid. He used the meeting to deliver a kick to a process that he felt was lagging

after his first eight months in office. After meeting with each leader individually, Mr. Obama presided over a reluctant joint handshake between them.

"We cannot continue the same pattern of taking tentative steps forward and then falling back," an impatient Mr. Obama declared. "Success depends on all sides acting with a sense of urgency."

To underscore his point, Mr. Obama singled out his secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, and special envoy, George J. Mitchell, and said he was directing them to build on the momentum achieved at the United Nations. Ultimately, Mr. Obama's effort ended in failure.

Mr. Trump named his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and one of his lawyers, Jason D. Greenblatt, to lead the peace

negotiations, which many saw as a symbol of his commitment to the process. But he did not mention either of them on Monday in his remarks with Mr. Netanyahu.

The two men, joined by another senior official, Dina H. Powell, last traveled to the region in late August, visiting several Arab countries before arriving in Jerusalem and the West Bank. There was no tangible progress toward talks, and by all accounts, their biggest achievement was simply keeping the Palestinians from abandoning the process.

If anything, the conditions for a peace agreement have deteriorated since Mr. Trump took office. Mr. Netanyahu is under investigation for corruption and, facing a possible indictment, he is highly unlikely to alienate his right-wing coalition by taking a risk on a peace agreement. Mr. Abbas, 82 and nearing the end

of his career, appears more preoccupied with feuding inside his Fatah Party than with striking a deal with Mr. Netanyahu.

There was a glimmer of hope in news Monday that Fatah, which administers the West Bank, and Hamas, the Islamic militant group that runs Gaza, were moving ahead with a plan for a Palestinian unity government under the leadership of Fatah. But such agreements have been proclaimed before, only to fall apart after the two sides could not agree on a transfer of power.

Some administration officials said that using the United Nations calendar to try to force negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians could backfire because the talks would inevitably fail, which would feed cynicism about the broader process.

Mr. Trump also faces an uphill battle reconciling Qatar and its neighbors. The Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, is not coming to the United Nations, depriving Mr. Trump of the chance to put him and the Qatari emir in the same room. But analysts said he had more leverage over the Gulf leaders than he does over the Israelis or Palestinians.

"The Saudis want us to stay in the region and counter the Iranian expansion and use of Shia militias," said Dennis B. Ross, who has worked on Middle East issues for several presidents. "So if we can show we have moved the Qataris, they won't say no to what we produce."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

5-7 minutes

The Key Question at the U.N.: What Does North Korea Want?

Gerald F. Seib

Sept. 18, 2017 12:04 p.m. ET

As President Donald Trump and other world leaders gather at the United Nations this week, a lot of important questions hang in the air, but none more important than this one: What does North Korea want?

That is, what is North Korea's real goal in its relentless, reckless pursuit of nuclear weapons as well as missiles that can carry them as far as the United States? The answer will determine whether it's even possible to push the country off the nuclear path at this point, or whether a strategy of regime change or containment of a nuclear-armed country are the most realistic options—or, most ominously, whether armed conflict is likely.

The international community is, of course, casting about for ways to deter North Korea, and U.S. officials say there will be conversations this week about imposing more-severe economic sanctions than the ones already implemented in a pair of U.N. Security Council resolutions this year. Chinese and Russian companies doing business with North Korea are likely targets.

Yet devising a strategy requires reaching some determination of what it would take to change North Korea's course. Nobody knows

for sure what is going on in the mind of North Korea's bombastic, 33-year-old leader, Kim Jong Un, and it's possible he is simply improvising. But the systematic effort he has undertaken suggests otherwise.

The most frightening possibility is that Mr. Kim considers nuclear weapons an existential requirement for his survival internally. Michael Pillsbury, a longtime Asian analyst now at the Hudson Institute, says some experts believe the North Korean nuclear program is the result of a deal with the North Korean military made long ago by Mr. Kim's father and grandfather, when they were in charge: "You keep us in power, and we'll deliver the nuclear weapon to you."

That possibility raises a troubling prospect, he adds: "Are we really dealing with something that is not negotiable...Is this a business deal and we haven't found the right price yet, or is it something sacred?"

Mr. Pillsbury, a former Pentagon official and author of a book about the long-term struggle between the U.S. and China, says he thinks many Chinese leaders subscribe to the theory that the nuclear program is the result of such a pact with the military—one that Mr. Kim can't afford to reverse.

It's also possible that Mr. Kim sees the nuclear program as necessary to protect himself not from some internal threat, but rather to

guarantee survival against external threats. This has been the more widely held theory over the past two decades.

It holds that Mr. Kim, like his father and grandfather, sees North Korea at perpetual risk of a hostile regime-change effort by South Korea and the U.S., and perhaps even by Pyongyang's nominal allies in China. The best way to keep that overthrow effort at bay is to brandish the possibility that the regime could respond with a nuclear strike.

In that case, there may be a deal to be struck. In theory, at least, if regime survival—as well as simple international respect and perhaps some handsome monetary reward for backing down—is the reason to possess nuclear weapons, then the need for those weapons goes away if the world provides a guarantee of regime survival and help entering the real global economy.

The third possibility is that North Korea wants nuclear arms for blackmail purposes. The Kim regime's real goal, under this theory, is to reunite North and South Korea under its rule, and it plans to use military might someday to achieve that goal.

The principal obstacle standing in the way is the U.S. commitment to defend South Korea. North Korea's way to eliminate that problem is to be able to say to the U.S. that Pyongyang will strike it with a

nuclear weapon if American forces come to the aid of South Korea. Would the U.S. defend Seoul if that meant putting Seattle at risk?

The differences among these possible goals deeply affect the approach the U.S. and its allies take. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is signaling that the Trump administration wants escalated economic pressure to compel Mr. Kim into meaningful negotiations over its nuclear program. Perhaps only in such negotiations is it possible to discern North Korea's real aims.

If diplomacy ultimately can't reverse the nuclear program, the U.S. and its allies likely will be looking at a long-term strategy of containing a nuclear-armed North Korea and all that entails: far more spending on missile-defense systems, a bigger American military presence in Asia, military buildups in Japan and South Korea, possibly the reintroduction of American tactical nuclear weapons into South Korea.

Such a containment strategy worked with the Soviet Union for half a century. It is an expensive and frightening proposition—though perhaps not as frightening as war on the Korean Peninsula.

Write to Gerald F. Seib at jerry.seib@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition as 'Key Question: What Does North Korea Want?.'



Pentagon chief says he was asked about reintroducing tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea

<https://www.facebook.com/dlamotho> 4-5 minutes

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, left, accompanied by Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford, speaks to media members at the White House on Sept. 3. (Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP)

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis acknowledged Monday that his South Korean counterpart inquired recently about reintroducing tactical nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula, a move that could take tensions with North Korea to a new high.

Mattis, speaking to reporters at the Pentagon, confirmed that he and Defense Minister Song Young-moo discussed the weapons during an Aug. 30 visit in Washington. The Pentagon chief did not say whether he'd support such an idea, however. Song has advocated for the move, calling it an "alternative worth a full review."

[South Korea's defense minister suggests bringing back tactical U.S. nuclear weapons]

Asked about the exchange, Mattis said that "we discussed the option," but he declined to elaborate.

"We have open dialogue with our allies on any issue they want to bring up," Mattis said.

The United States maintained nuclear weapons in South Korea during much of the Cold War, but President George H.W. Bush ordered their removal after the Soviet Union's fall in 1991. At the time, Bush saw it as a way of bolstering demands that North Korea not pursue its own nuclear weapons.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has said several times that he is against the return of nuclear weapons, but he faces opposition on that point from many conservative leaders in his country. Tactical nuclear weapons, sometimes called nonstrategic

nukes, are designed to strike military targets such as bunkers and tunnels but are still considered immensely powerful in their own right and a potential gateway to larger nuclear attacks.

Some senior U.S. military officials, such as Air Force Gen. Paul J. Selva, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have advocated generally for more "small-yield" nuclear weapons, arguing that the United States needs the ability to respond to an attack using a smaller nuclear bomb with something of similar size.

But Air Force Gen. John Hyten, who oversees U.S. nuclear weapons as the chief of U.S. Strategic Command, took exception Thursday to calling even smaller nuclear weapons tactical. Speaking with reporters at his headquarters in Nebraska, he called the phrase a misnomer and "actually a very dangerous term" because there are significant consequences to using nuclear weapons in any format.

"To call it a tactical weapon brings into the possibility that there could be a nuclear weapon employed on a battlefield for a tactical effect," Hyten said. "It's not a tactical effect, and if somebody employs what is a nonstrategic or tactical nuclear weapon, the United States will respond strategically, not tactically, because they have now crossed a line, a line that has not been crossed since 1945."

Checkpoint newsletter

Military, defense and security at home and abroad.

Mattis said last week that he would not discuss whether he is looking at reintroducing nuclear weapons in South Korea.

"It's simply a longstanding policy so the enemy ... our adversaries never know where they're at," he said. "It's part of the deterrent that they cannot target them all. There's always a great big question mark."



Trump's claim there were long gas lines in North Korea has residents puzzled

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

14-17 minutes

People gather to watch footage of the launch of a Hwasong-12 rocket, beside a billboard advertising North Korea's Pyeonghwa Motors, in Pyongyang on Sept. 16. (AFP via Getty Images)

TOKYO — In his latest Twitter outburst against North Korea, President Trump said that "long gas lines [are] forming in North Korea," adding an exclamatory "Too bad!" (In the same tweet, he bestowed a new nickname on Kim Jong Un: "Rocket Man.")

But from where is the president getting this information about gas lines?

Residents in the North Korean capital are scratching their heads. Although there are reports of price increases, they've seen no queues at the few service stations in Pyongyang, a city of about 2 million people that has more cars than it used to but is still far from congested.

"We are not aware of any long queues at the gas stations," one foreign resident of Pyongyang said. "At least, I haven't noticed anything. I asked a few Koreans, and they haven't seen anything either."

Another said there had been no obvious change since the last

sanctions resolution was passed by the U.N. Security Council. "Traffic on Friday was as heavy here as I've seen it. Normal on Saturday. Quieter on Sunday." In other words, the same as every week.

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in and President Trump agreed to exert stronger pressure through sanctions on North Korea Sept. 17. South Korea's President Moon Jae-in and President Trump agreed to exert stronger pressure through sanctions on North Korea Sept. 17. (Reuters)

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in and President Trump agreed to exert stronger pressure through sanctions on North Korea Sept. 17. (Reuters)

In its effort to punish Kim Jong Un for his continued defiance — repeated missile launches, a huge nuclear test — the United States has been leading a push to cut off oil to the isolated state. Its efforts to impose a complete oil embargo on North Korea failed, with China and Russia threatening to use their Security Council veto powers to block such a resolution.

Instead, the new sanctions measures passed last week cap North Korea's imports of crude oil at the level they have been over the past year and limit refined petroleum imports — including gasoline, diesel and heavy fuel oil — to 2 million barrels a year.

North Korea receives about 4.5 million barrels of refined petroleum products a year and 4 million barrels of crude. The new sanctions will cut oil exports to North Korea by about 30 percent, the United States mission to the United Nations said. Fifty-five percent of that cut would be in refined products, it said, and the sanctions limit North Korea's ability to import substitutes.

But analysts say there is plenty of wiggle room for China to continue supplying oil to North Korea if it wants to — just as a "livelihood exception" for coal exports previously did.

While supporting the sanctions in principle, China has a patchy record on implementation, and implementation depends almost entirely on China. About 90 percent of North Korea's trade goes through China.

Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke Monday about North Korea, and, according to a White House statement, "committed to maximizing pressure on North Korea through vigorous enforcement of United Nations Security Council resolutions."

The sanctions are unlikely to have a significant effect on North Korea's military or nuclear weapons and missile programs, said David von Hippel and Peter Hayes of the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability.

"These military sectors will have priority access to refined fuels, including likely fuel caches of significant volume that have already been stockpiled and provide a substantial buffer against the sanctions," they wrote in a recent note. "Primarily, these sanctions will affect the civilian population."

North Korea was constantly looking for — and finding — ways around the sanctions, making the state more resilient to existing and future sanctions, von Hippel and Hayes wrote.

For three decades, North Korean Ri Jong Ho was one of many men responsible for secretly sending millions of dollars back to Pyongyang. He sat down with The Washington Post's Anna Fifield to tell his story. For three decades, North Korean Ri Jong Ho was one of many men responsible for secretly sending millions of dollars back to Pyongyang. He sat down with The Washington Post's Anna Fifield to tell his story. (Video: Anna Fifield, Jason Aldag/Photo: Jahi Chikwendu/The Washington Post)

For three decades, North Korean Ri Jong Ho was one of many men responsible for secretly sending millions of dollars back to Pyongyang. He sat down with The Washington Post's Anna Fifield to tell his story. (Anna Fifield, Jason Aldag/The Washington Post)

That means the new sanctions will have little effect on the desired goal

— reversing North Korea's missile and nuclear programs — and could diminish the leverage that the international community has over North Korea. For example, when it needs to persuade North Korea to come back to denuclearization talks, the analysts said.

Although there are no obvious signs of gas lines forming — no surprise in a country where there is almost no private car ownership — there has been evidence of an increase in prices.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Gordon Lubold in Washington, D.C., and Laurence Norman in Vienna

4-5 minutes

Sept. 18, 2017 8:37 p.m. ET

The U.S. has military options available for North Korea that won't put South Korea at grave risk of counterattack, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Monday, but he refused to spell out what those are.

Mr. Mattis also said in an impromptu meeting with reporters at the Pentagon that the U.S. isn't likely to try to shoot down the type of missiles launched so far by North Korea because they haven't threatened the U.S. or its interests.

And asked whether the U.S. was holding discussions with South Korea about the possibility of basing tactical nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula, Mr. Mattis said: "We have an open dialogue with our allies on any issue; we are not only friends we are trusted allies, and we bring up all issues."

U.S. and allied officials and military experts have repeatedly warned that any military attack on North

Gasoline prices started to rise in certain parts of the country, apparently in anticipation of shortages, after North Korea's sixth nuclear test, conducted Sept. 3.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

In Pyongyang, one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of gasoline — that's how it

is measured in North Korea — rose from 18,000 to 23,000 North Korean won during the first week of September, the Daily NK website reported, citing people in the capital. Diesel prices had also risen, it reported.

There have been blips like this several times this year, but analysts say they have seen no other signs of stress in the economy — such as rising rice prices or sudden exchange rate fluctuations.

There have been some limitations on filling jerrycans, but this appeared to be a measure to stop reselling and had been in place for some time, one Pyongyang resident said.

Others said it will take time to see whether there is any effect from the sanctions — and certainly longer than the week it took before Trump claimed there was an impact.

Jim Mattis Hints at Secret Military Options for North Korea

Gordon Lubold in Washington, D.C., and Laurence Norman in Vienna

4-5 minutes

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U.S. and allied officials and military experts have repeatedly warned that any military attack on North

Korea would bring a massive conventional counterattack against South Korea. While Mr. Mattis didn't explain what military options could avoid such a retaliation, the U.S. considers actions such as military maneuvers and aircraft flyovers to be among options they use to pressure North Korea militarily.

Mr. Mattis's comments came as world leaders gathered at the United Nations this week grapple with the threat of armed conflict. President Donald Trump plans to make North Korea's drive for an intercontinental nuclear missile a major issue of his address there Tuesday and in his meetings with counterparts.

If a diplomatic resolution emerges, the head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency said in an interview Tuesday, monitors would be able to keep check on North Korea's nuclear-related activities.

Yukiya Amano told The Wall Street Journal that the International Atomic Energy Agency could quickly have inspectors on the ground to oversee any agreement on a freeze or a rollback.

The IAEA has recently stepped up work on North Korea, eight years after Pyongyang kicked the

organization's inspectors out of the country.

Mr. Amano has ordered increased satellite monitoring and established a unit on North Korea in the agency's executive body to ensure inspectors are ready if international talks opens the way for their return. "We are monitoring the situation through satellite imagery and we cannot say for 100%, but we have a good understanding of the nuclear program," he added.

Mr. Amano wouldn't say whether he believed the U.S. objective—denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula—was achievable in coming years.

Mr. Amano said Monday he wouldn't guess what impact a U.S. withdrawal from the Iranian agreement would have on the prospect of a diplomatic solution to the North Korean crisis. Some former U.S. officials have said it could dash any hopes of convincing Pyongyang to engage in serious negotiations.

Mr. Mattis said there still are diplomatic options, including punitive sanctions, which he said are working.

"We are putting the leader in North Korea in a position to be aware that...there is a penalty to be paid for ignoring international concerns and norms," he said.

U.S. and Japanese officials, meanwhile, continue to closely monitor the North Korean test launches, he said.

"Those missiles are not directly threatening any of us," he said. "Obviously, Japan's missile defenses are up, and their radars are operating, ours are."

The North Koreans, Mr. Mattis said, are intentionally keeping their provocations from "going over some sort of line in their minds that would make them vulnerable."

"The bottom line is that...were there to be a threat to U.S. territory—Guam, obviously, Japan, Japan's territory—that would elicit a different response from us," Mr. Mattis said.

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Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition as 'Mattis Hints at Korea Military Options.'

The New York Times

Mattis Leaves the Door Open to Military Options in North Korea

Helene Cooper

5-6 minutes

A television broadcast in South Korea last week reporting a North Korean missile launch. Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images

WASHINGTON — The United States and its allies have not shot down any North Korean missiles because Pyongyang has yet to launch one that directly threatens American or Japanese territory, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said on Monday.

But he said that could change. North Korean missiles have been

falling "in the middle of the ocean," Mr. Mattis said. "Were they to be aimed at Guam, or U.S. territory," he added, "that would elicit a different response."

The defense secretary also said he believed that the United States had found military options to handle the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula that would not put the South Korean capital, Seoul, at grave risk, though he refused to elaborate on what those might be.

Most military experts believe that because Seoul is only 35 miles from the demilitarized zone along the border between North and South Korea, the city and its more than 10 million inhabitants would be put in

Pyongyang's immediate cross hairs for retaliation if the United States made a pre-emptive strike on the North. As a first strike would be unlikely to eliminate all of North Korea's conventional and nuclear weapons — not to mention its chemical or biological ones — American policy makers have traditionally held the view that a pre-emptive strike would likely put an untenable number of civilians at risk.

American officials also do not have high confidence that the military could find and destroy North Korea's entire arsenal of long-range missiles and nuclear warheads. It would then be up to American missile defenses to knock out any

that survived and that North Korea might use to attack the United States or its allies.

Even a limited strike — on, say, a North Korean missile on its launching pad or a missile in midair — would pose risks that the North's leader, Kim Jong-un, might retaliate, setting off a spiral of escalation that could plunge the Korean Peninsula into war.

Mr. Mattis would not say how the United States might bypass that risk while exercising military options. "I won't go into detail," he told reporters at the Pentagon during an unannounced news conference on Monday. He also declined to say specifically whether those options

would be “kinetic” — military-speak for lethal force like bombings, airstrikes or ground combat.

Defending Against a North Korean Missile

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



White House Says It Reiterated Its Stance on Paris Climate Deal

Emre Peker
5-6 minutes

Military experts said options that might not prompt immediate retaliation against Seoul could include cyberwarfare or even an assassination attempt on Mr. Kim — though such an attempt would have to be successful. Other potential options are a naval blockade of North Korea, or a deployment of additional troops to the region.

But signs that the United States is actually preparing a military option in North Korea — like a repositioning of military assets or an evacuation of American citizens in

the region — have not appeared so far.

Mr. Mattis also said that he believed that North Korea, which most recently launched two missiles that flew over Japan, was deliberately carrying out tests that came as close as possible to provoking the United States, without eliciting a military response.

His comments come as the Trump administration has struck increasingly bellicose tone toward Pyongyang in the face of a sharply

accelerated pace of missile tests from North Korea.

But on Monday, Mr. Mattis said he believed that diplomacy and sanctions were managing to put pressure on Pyongyang, which he said was finding itself increasingly isolated. Mr. Mattis cited as proof a recent decision by the Mexican government to declare the North Korea ambassador there “persona non grata” — a move which essentially expelled him from the country.

Updated Sept. 18, 2017 8:12 p.m. ET

UNITED NATIONS—The White House reiterated on Monday that its stance on the Paris climate accord hasn’t changed, following signals over the weekend that the U.S. was exploring ways to remain in the 2015 pact.

“We are withdrawing from the Paris Agreement unless we can re-engage on terms more favorable to the United States. This position was made very clear,” a senior White House official said after top Trump economic aide Gary Cohn hosted a closed-door meeting with about a dozen international climate-action representatives.

Monday’s breakfast meeting in New York came on the heels of a ministerial gathering Saturday in Montreal, where, according to several participants, the U.S. broached revising its greenhouse-gas emissions targets instead of scrapping the deal signed by every country but Syria and Nicaragua.

Mr. Cohn, who is leading the White House’s efforts on the climate pact, joins other top White House officials who in recent days expressed an openness to renew cooperation

under the accord. But he hasn’t laid out what modifications of the Paris accord would satisfy U.S. demands, according to officials familiar with the discussions.

“There was some confusion over the weekend and I think we removed all the confusion,” Mr. Cohn said after his meeting. He didn’t provide details beyond saying the meeting was “very constructive.”

Canada, China and the European Union, which organized the Montreal gathering, have been leading an effort to bolster the Paris accord since Mr. Trump said in June that the U.S. would withdraw from the pact, citing sovereignty and economic concerns. The president had, however, left an open door to renegotiate the agreement or broker an “entirely new transaction, on terms that are fair to the United States.”

International heavyweights led by China and the EU have made clear that they won’t engage in renegotiations of the Paris agreement. That leaves Mr. Trump with two options.

He could submit a written request at the end of a three-year no-exit period in November 2019, pulling the U.S. out after one year. Alternatively, he could revise U.S. commitments to reduce its nonbinding carbon-emission targets within the Paris accord.

“It’s up to the U.S. to determine what it’s going to do,” Canadian Environment Minister Catherine McKenna said Monday following Mr. Cohn’s meeting. Mr. Cohn offered no details on what the Trump administration sought in terms of the accord, Ms. McKenna said.

The gathering took place a day after White House national security adviser H.R. McMaster and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the president would support remaining in the Paris accord if its terms changed. They didn’t say what the U.S. wanted in a revised pact.

According to an official familiar with the recent climate talks, Mr. Cohn told the participants that the “U.S. could remain in the Paris Agreement under the right conditions, but these are not there yet.”

The White House official said the U.S. is committed to “a balanced approach reducing emissions that does not sacrifice energy security or economic growth.”

South African Environment Minister Edna Molewa said Mr. Cohn didn’t present any new information, but she nevertheless cast the meeting as a good step, according to a spokeswoman for the minister. Ms. Molewa emphasized the need for continued U.S. presence in and

implementation of the Paris accord, adding, “engagement is very tough.”

The event was held on the sidelines of the annual United Nations gathering, where world leaders will discuss combating climate change.

Most major players are trying to push forward in meeting Paris goals. The EU hosted a gathering on Sunday, when global and local U.S. officials, including California Gov. Jerry Brown, reiterated their pledge to intensify efforts to curb global warming. Canadian and British leaders unveiled Monday in Ottawa a joint effort to push for clean growth and to fight climate change, similar to a partnership unveiled over the summer by China and the EU.

“In Paris, we rose to a global challenge,” U.N. Secretary General António Guterres said Monday at a high-level dialogue on climate change. “Now we have an even bigger challenge: raising ambition and staying on course.”

—Paul Vieira and Eli Stokols contributed to this article.

Write to Emre Peker at emre.peker@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition as ‘U.S. Says It Hasn’t Shifted on Climate Accord.’



Trump Adviser Tells Ministers U.S. Will Leave Paris Climate Accord

Lisa Friedman
4-5 minutes

Gary D. Cohn, the White House economic adviser, reaffirmed to a number of foreign ministers on Monday the United States’ intention to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement. Jonathan Ernst/Reuters

UNITED NATIONS — Gary D. Cohn, the top White House economic adviser, told ministers

from several major allies on Monday that the Trump administration was “unambiguous” about its plans to withdraw from the Paris agreement on climate change unless new terms were met.

Ministers emerging from the 90-minute breakfast in a back room of The Smith, a brasserie near the United Nations, described the meeting as genial and productive. But, they said, they learned no specifics from Mr. Cohn about the likelihood of the United States’

remaining in the global accord or what changes would be needed to make it acceptable to the White House.

“I made the president’s position unambiguous, to where the president stands and where the administration stands on Paris,” Mr. Cohn told reporters after the meeting. “We reaffirmed the president’s statement that he made in the Rose Garden, and we continue to reinforce what the president is saying.”

President Trump announced in a Rose Garden speech in June that the Paris agreement — under which nearly 200 nations pledged voluntary targets to cut planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions and to support poor countries grappling with rising global temperatures — was bad for America’s economy. He said the United States would withdraw from the agreement, but left open the possibility that he might try to “renegotiate” the accord.

When the State Department filed a formal notice to the United Nations that it intended to withdraw from the Paris agreement, officials made clear that Washington might rejoin if "suitable terms" were found.

Yet several diplomats said that while the United States' position may have been clear, its plans were not.

Ministers said Mr. Cohn did not clarify what it might take for the

United States to remain a party to the accord, other than saying such conditions "are not there yet," according to two aides who received summaries of the meeting. Both said Mr. Cohn emphasized that the United States wanted to work with other countries on climate change and energy.

"It was quite clear that their position is, right now they are pulling out of

the Paris agreement," said Catherine McKenna, Canada's environment minister. Ms. McKenna said she had asserted that the accord was "nonnegotiable and irreversible," but she said there was broad agreement that countries wanted to lower emissions without harming the economy.

"The fact that we're meeting is quite good," said Edna Molewa, the South African environment minister. "You know, in climate change

discussions we believe in engagement, and engagement is very tough." She said she did not learn anything new from the meeting with Mr. Cohn but added, "It's important to understand where we come from."

Also at the meeting were ministers from Argentina, Brazil, the European Union, Japan and Australia. The White House has not released a full list of attendees.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

6-8 minutes

Updated Sept. 18, 2017 6:34 p.m. ET

VIENNA—Iranian Vice President Ali Akbar Salehi accused the U.S. of violating the spirit and letter of the 2015 nuclear deal, escalating a clash between the two countries at the start of a crucial week of talks on the accord's future.

President Donald Trump has said he expects not to certify Iran's compliance with the accord when a decision comes due next month, a move that could unravel the agreement. Failure to certify the accord would give Congress an opportunity to decide whether to reimpose U.S. sanctions that were suspended as part of the 2015 deal.

Speaking Monday at the annual conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which oversees Iran's compliance with the accord, Mr. Salehi said Iran was complying fully with the agreement. Under the pact, Tehran significantly reduced its nuclear program.

"The American administration's overtly hostile attitude and actual foot-dragging policies and measures aim at undermining the nuclear deal and blocking Iran's legitimate benefits from its full implementation," said Mr. Salehi, who also heads Iran's atomic agency. That is "contrary to the letter and spirit" of the nuclear deal.

Mr. Salehi's comments took place as world leaders gather in New York for the annual United Nations General Assembly. A meeting of foreign ministers from Iran and the six countries that negotiated the

Iran Accuses U.S. of Sabotaging Nuclear Deal Ahead of U.N. Talks

Laurence Norman

agreement will take place on Wednesday, the highest level meeting between Iranian and U.S. officials since Mr. Trump took office.

Before a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in New York on Monday, Mr. Trump, responding to a question on whether the U.S. intends to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, said "You'll see very soon."

Mr. Netanyahu described the deal as "terrible" and said he and Mr. Trump would discuss how to address "Iran's growing aggression in the region."

Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who steers Iran's foreign-policy decisions, on Sunday warned that any "wrong move by domineering powers" on the accord would draw an Iranian response.

Iran has complained that the U.S. is undercutting the accord by increasing sanctions on Iran and by pressing international partners not to do business with Iran. U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said while Iran may be in "technical compliance" with the accord, it has violated the spirit of the accord through its missile tests, support for terrorism and its regional actions in Syria and Yemen.

So far, the body that oversees implementation of the agreement has said all sides are complying. That body, the Joint Commission, meets again in New York on Tuesday.

U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry, also speaking in Vienna, again pressed the IAEA to step up its oversight of Iran's activities. U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley said last month, following a visit to the IAEA, that there were hundreds

of sites in Iran where suspicious activities could be taking place. She raised particular concerns about Iranian statements that they wouldn't allow the IAEA to access military sites.

Mr. Perry said Monday that the U.S. "strongly encourages the IAEA to exercise its full authorities to verify Iran's adherence to each and every nuclear commitments" under the agreement. "We will not accept a weakly enforced or inadequately monitored deal."

In an interview Monday evening, the IAEA's Director General Yukiya Amano pushed back against U.S. concerns, saying his agency wouldn't change its approach to its work.

"We have a very established method. It doesn't happen [that] someone thinks shall we lean back or shall we be more aggressive. We never think in that way. We do it properly," he said. "We are a technical organization. And our interest is to do our job professionally and objectively and impartially."

Mr. Amano wouldn't say whether the agency has visited military sites but he said Iran has complied with its commitments under the accord. On no occasion, he said, had Iran deliberately denied or delayed inspectors access to a site. He acknowledged however that on occasion, it had taken some time to arrange visits.

U.S. officials also have expressed concern about the agreement's terms, specifically the expiry of key constraints on Iran's nuclear activities starting from the middle of the next decade. Critics of the deal say that could open a pathway over time for Iran to acquire nuclear weapons.

Washington has been pressing European governments to adopt a more aggressive stance against Iran, both over the nuclear accord and on Tehran's other actions. European officials have said they support the current agreement.

"The agreement is solid and we will make sure the agreement is strictly implemented," French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said. He declined to comment on what would happen if the U.S. pulls out of the agreement.

In Vienna on Monday, Mr. Amano was re-elected for a third four-year term as the agency's head.

The former Japanese diplomat, 70, has steered the IAEA during one of its most turbulent periods since 2009. He was in charge during the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan in 2011 and as North Korea expanded its nuclear program and expelled IAEA inspectors.

Mr. Amano said he wouldn't speculate on whether a fresh crisis is brewing over the Iranian nuclear accord amid the tensions between Washington and Tehran.

"I am not optimistic or pessimistic at all. In this business related to Iran ... what is true is only for today. Tomorrow, things can change," he told The Wall Street Journal. "This is verification. We only see the facts as of now."

—Emre Peker in New York contributed to this article.

Write to Laurence Norman at laurence.norman@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition as 'Tehran Accuses U.S. of Violating Accord.'

The New York Times

Eric Schmitt

6-7 minutes

Iran Is Smuggling Increasingly Potent Weapons Into Yemen, U.S. Admiral Says

Houthi protested a Saudi-led coalition airstrike that hit a hospital

in Sana, Yemen, in August 2016. Khaled Abdullah/Reuters

The top American admiral in the Middle East said on Monday that Iran continues to smuggle illicit weapons and technology into Yemen, stoking the civil strife there and enabling Iranian-backed rebels to fire missiles into neighboring Saudi Arabia that are more precise and far-reaching.

Iran has been repeatedly accused of providing arms helping to fuel one side of the war in Yemen, in which rebels from the country's north, the Houthis, ousted the government from the capital of Sana in 2014.

The officer, Vice Adm. Kevin M. Donegan, said that Iran is sustaining the Houthis with an increasingly potent arsenal of anti-ship and ballistic missiles, deadly sea mines and even explosive boats that have attacked allied ships in the Red Sea or Saudi territory across Yemen's northern border. The United States, the Yemeni government and their allies in the region have retaliated with strikes of their own and recaptured some Houthi-held coastal areas to help blunt threats to international shipping, but the peril persists, the admiral said.

"These types of weapons did not exist in Yemen before the conflict," said Admiral Donegan. "It's not rocket science to conclude that the Houthis are getting not only these systems but likely training and advice and assistance in how to use them."

Admiral Donegan gave his assessment in an hourlong

telephone interview from his Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain as he prepared to conclude his two-year tour, and take a new assignment at the Pentagon.

Vice Adm. Kevin M. Donegan in 2015. Hasan Jamali/Associated Press

The admiral's comments came a day before President Trump is to address the United Nations General Assembly amid deep uncertainty about what he will do about the nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers, including the United States. The administration is conducting a review of its Iran policy, to include Iran's backing of Shia fighters in Syria and Iraq.

In the wide-ranging interview, Admiral Donegan said that the bitter rift between Qatar and many of its Persian Gulf neighbors, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, who accuse Qatar of financing militants and having overly cozy relations with Iran, has not yet hindered coalition efforts to battle terrorism, piracy or other mutual maritime scourges.

Admiral Donegan also said that the Navy's recent 24-hour stand-down of ships around the world after two fatal collisions in the western Pacific revealed some shortcomings among ships in the Middle East that commanders were now correcting. The admiral declined for security reasons to identify the problem areas, but senior Navy officials had said the "operational pause" was to review safety and operational procedures.

On Monday, the new head of the Seventh Fleet in Japan, Vice Adm. Phillip G. Sawyer, announced that two more senior officers in the fleet had been relieved of their commands: Rear Adm. Charles Williams, the head of the Navy's largest operational battle force, and his subordinate in charge of destroyers in the region, Capt. Jeffrey Bennett. Both were relieved because of a loss of confidence in their ability to command, according to a Navy statement.

In addition, the officer overseeing Navy surface warfare, Vice Adm. Tom Rowden, has requested early retirement.

Vice Adm. Joseph P. Aucoin, the previous head of the Seventh Fleet, the Navy's largest overseas, was removed last month in connection with four accidents in the region since January, including the two deadly collisions between Navy destroyers and commercial vessels that left 17 sailors dead.

Admiral Donegan's most pointed accusations focused on suspected Iranian assistance to the Houthi rebels. The United States and other Western governments have provided vast quantities of weapons, and other forms of military support, to the embattled Yemeni government and its allies in a coalition led by Saudi Arabia, contributing to violence that the United Nations says has caused more than 10,000 civilian casualties.

The admiral's charges appear supported, at least in part, by

findings in a report late last year by Conflict Armament Research, a private arms consultancy. The report concluded that the available evidence pointed to an apparent "weapon pipeline, extending from Iran to Somalia and Yemen, which involves the transfer, by dhow, of significant quantities of Iranian-manufactured weapons and weapons that plausibly derive from Iranian stockpiles."

For years, Iran has been under a series of international sanctions prohibiting it from exporting arms. The United States has frequently claimed that Tehran has violated the sanctions in support of proxy forces in many conflicts, including in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and the Palestinian territories.

Between Sept. 2015 through March 2016, allied warships interdicted four Iranian dhows that yielded, in total, more than 80 antitank guided missiles and 5,000 Kalashnikov rifles as well as sniper rifles, machine guns and almost 300 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, according to data provided by the United States Navy.

Admiral Donegan said that while there have been no seizures since, he said he suspects Iran's hand in the Houthis' apparent ability to replenish and improve their arms stockpiles. "It is not something that was a one-time deal and stopped," Admiral Donegan said. "It appears to be progressive."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

6-7 minutes

Russia and China Begin Joint War Games

Thomas Grove

Updated Sept. 18, 2017 3:37 p.m. ET

MINSK, Belarus—Russia and China launched joint war games in the North Pacific on Monday, showcasing a budding military partnership and giving Moscow a venue to double up on its display of military might as world leaders convene at the United Nations.

Chinese and Russian forces are set to conduct eight days of land and sea drills, including defending ships from attack by air or by other surface ships, the Chinese Defense Ministry said.

No formal military alliance exists between Russia and China, but they are developing common equipment and techniques that allow them to train and fight together.

"They are building a de facto alliance," said Vasily Kashin, a military expert and China specialist at the Higher School of Economics. "They want to understand on a granular level how their two militaries can cooperate."

At the same time, Russia is winding down one of its biggest military exercises since the Cold War. As leaders began to assemble in New York for the annual U.N. General Assembly, Russian President Vladimir Putin made the pointed gesture of staying in Russia on Monday to observe the military games, known as Zapad, just outside his hometown of St. Petersburg.

For Russia, the latest exercises are a form of diplomacy in their own right. Moscow is facing lingering problems over international refusal to recognize its annexation of the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. It is also

facing broader sanctions from the U.S.

"Russia is trying to show Europe and the United States that it is ready for a full-scale war and that is why we should all sit down and talk about geopolitics on Russia's terms," said Arseny Sivitsky, director of the Belarus-based Center for Strategic and Foreign Policy Studies, which is close to the Belarusian foreign and defense ministries.

The latest series of exercises began on Monday as a detachment of Chinese naval vessels entered Russia's far-eastern port of Vladivostok and were greeted by an artillery salute, the Russian military said.

Though the exercises with China highlight Moscow's relationship with a powerful partner, Russia and China are in many respects rivals. The Soviet Union fought a brief border war with China in 1969, and

many Russians are anxious about the long-term aims of its populous and resource-hungry neighbor.

But with tensions rising between Russia and the West, Mr. Putin has increasingly tried to make inroads with Beijing and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Last month, Beijing invited Russian soldiers to China to let them familiarize themselves with Chinese-made small arms and artillery. One year earlier, military cooks from the two countries even held field-kitchen cook-offs.

Russia and China are increasing military cooperation as the U.S. steps up its own military presence in the Pacific region in response to challenges from North Korea and China's rising power.

Most recently, the U.S. sent four of its most advanced jet fighters and a pair of bombers over the Korean Peninsula, alongside Japanese and South Korean aircraft, in direct

response to North Korea firing a missile over Japan.

This month's Russian-Chinese exercises follow joint U.S.-South Korean exercises in late August. Last year, Russia sent two antisubmarine ships and an amphibious warfare ship to train with China in the South China Sea, where Beijing has entered into numerous territorial disputes.

The potential for a Russian-Chinese alliance is in part a response to U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization influence in Europe and the American presence in Asia.

While NATO offers a division of labor among member countries, "here we see two countries that are

not going to be part of the same machine, but who are learning how to fight side by side with one another," said Alexander Gabuyev, a specialist in Russian-Chinese relations at the Moscow-based Carnegie Center.

The Pacific exercises also give China an increasingly expeditionary force the experience it needs to operate far beyond its own borders.

China's fleet of modern attack submarines has been expanding rapidly in recent years and patrolling with increasing frequency and over longer ranges, including far into the Indian and Pacific oceans, but it has no combat experience.

The drills will be a "great help for the Chinese navy in raising its capabilities for sea defense and combat, and for far-seas operations," Senior Capt. Zhang Junshe, a researcher at China's Naval Military Studies Research Institute, told China Central Television, the state broadcaster.

The joint drills with Russia are taking place in the Sea of Japan, where the two sides held exercises in 2013, and for the first time in the Sea of Okhotsk, long used by Moscow for operations with nuclear missile submarines.

A Chinese submersible rescue vehicle will also dock with a Russian

submarine underwater for the first time, Capt. Zhang said.

Undersea warfare is a growing priority for China and one area where it has much to learn from Russia, which supplied it with submarines in the 1950s and from the 1990s, including about a dozen Kilo-class models that are still in service.

—Jeremy Page and Xiao Xiao in Beijing contributed to this article.

Write to Thomas Grove at thomas.grove@wsj.com

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The
Washington
Post

What would a Russia-NATO war look like? Russia's wargaming it right now.

<https://www.facebook.com/roth.andrew?fref=ts>

8-10 minutes

On Sept. 18, President Vladimir Putin watched as the Russian military battled an imaginary Western invasion. On Sept. 18, President Vladimir Putin watched as the Russian military battled an imaginary Western invasion. (David Filipov, Joyce Lee/The Washington Post)

On Sept. 18, President Vladimir Putin watched as the Russian military battled an imaginary Western invasion. (David Filipov, Joyce Lee/The Washington Post)

LUGA, Russia — A revitalized Russian military on Monday sent tanks, paratroopers, artillery, anti-aircraft weapons, jets and helicopters into frigid rains to engage the forces of a mock enemy called the "Western Coalition." The barrage of firepower, part of war games that began last week, was an explosive show of force that Baltic leaders said was a simulation of an attack against NATO forces in Eastern Europe.

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the field Monday, skipping the 72nd U.N. General Assembly in favor of the military exercises held jointly with Belarus. The muscle-flexing, which began Thursday, highlights the lethality of a fighting force that has taken a crash course of reforms and upgrades over the last decade.

In response, U.S. fighter jets in Lithuania have been scrambling nearly daily to inspect Russian activity over the Baltic Sea.

"It gets your blood pumping," U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Clinton Guenther, commander of a beefed-up NATO deployment of fighters in the Baltic country, said of the scrambling.

The Zapad war games — the word means "West" in Russian — focus on a hostile imaginary country called Veishnoria, which resembles a slice of the western part of Belarus with the biggest Catholic population and the highest prevalence of the Belarusian language. Veishnoria, along with two imaginary allies that appear to be stand-ins for the Baltics, attempts regime change in the Belarusian capital, Minsk, then foments separatism in parts of Belarus. Russian President Vladimir Putin, center, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, left, and Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov, second right, watch a military exercise at a training ground at the Luzhsky Range, near St. Petersburg, Sept. 18. (Mikhail Klimentyev/AP)

The Baltic countries that would be on the front lines of any potential Western conflict with Russia say that the exercises are only nominally about separatism and are mainly intended to leave them rattled.

"Russia is still trying to demonstrate force and aggression in its relations to its neighbors," Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė said in an interview.

But deployments this year of about 4,000 NATO troops across the Baltics and Poland leave the region far more confident that Russia will hold back from direct military confrontation, she said.

"We are prepared as never before. It's incomparable with 2009 or

2013," the years of the other most recent Western-facing exercises, she said. NATO deployed troops and further bolstered its military presence in the region after Moscow annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014.

[The enemy is clear in Russia and Belarus war games]

Moscow has insisted that the exercises would rehearse a strictly defensive scenario and involve no more than 12,700 troops, just below the level that would require Russia to allow NATO observers under an international agreement. NATO leaders have said that the exercise may actually involve up to 100,000 troops.

For Russia, the exercises are a chance to exhibit the new strength of its military, which has undergone a decade-long modernization and deeply desires to shed its reputation as the creaky, inefficient successor of the Soviet Red Army. Military officials sought to show the success of the exercises despite the adverse weather conditions.

Putin arrived by helicopter at the Luzhsky military training range on Monday afternoon to observe the exercises. He did not give public statements, but let Russia's guns speak for him. If the yearly parade of Russian missiles and tanks on Victory Day in Red Square is a moment for pomp and circumstance, the Zapad war games are supposed to display the efficiency and strength of the renewed, and battle-tested, Russian military.

On Monday, the exercises began with the Russians launching a desperate defense: Tracer bullets sailed over a muddy field, while anti-aircraft guns released salvos to

down enemy drones and cruise missiles. Russia launched short-range ballistic missiles, naval forces and its newest Ka-52 attack helicopters. After repelling the invasion, the Russian forces launched a T-72-tank-led counteroffensive. (In the end, the Russians won.)

Military commanders said that 95 foreign representatives from 50 countries, including NATO member states, attended the exercises. They also sought to underline Russian aviation's ability to maintain combat operations in poor weather, with two flights of four Sukhoi Su-24M bombers carrying out airstrikes in the driving rain.

"The strike on ground targets was complicated by weather conditions: heavy precipitation, low clouds, and strong gusts of wind," a Russian Defense Ministry report said. The planes dropped 250-kilogram high-explosive fragmentation bombs. The pilots destroyed ground targets imitating infrastructure, fortifications and convoys of the simulated enemy, it said.

[What pro-democracy activists in Belarus fear most about the war games]

In the first phase of the exercises, which ended over the weekend, Russian and Belarusian forces defended civilian infrastructure from enemy cruise missiles in coordination with ground-based air defense. With the diversionary force defeated, Russia went on the offensive for phase two.

The top U.S. general in Europe said that NATO was being vigilant about the war games but that he had not "seen anything that indicates it being anything other than an exercise."

In Tirana, Albania, Army Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, who is also the supreme allied commander of NATO, said he had seen no evidence that Russia might leave a force in the Baltic region after the exercises conclude.

Scaparrotti did say the exercises were "larger than what they told us."

"It's following in line with what we've seen with these annual exercises in the past. They're usually very large. They're usually initially defensive in nature but also have an offensive

portion thereafter that looks to me like a rehearsal of an attack," Scaparrotti added. "That's worrisome if you're a NATO country on the border."

One Lithuanian army officer, Lt. Col. Linas Idzelis, said that some of his civilian friends considered planning vacations around the exercises, so that they would be outside the country in case of invasion. He said he told them they should not be concerned.

Putin's arrival at the war games came as world leaders and

diplomats gathered in New York for the U.N. General Assembly.

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In recent months, the U.N. Security Council has seen angry confrontations between Russia and the United States over alleged hacking in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, as well as the international response to the North Korean nuclear program.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Monday that Putin's absence was not a snub to the United Nations.

"Indeed, this year the president's schedule did not allow him to participate in the General Assembly session, and he does not take part every year. So there's nothing unusual in this case," Peskov said.

Birnbaum reported from Vilnius, Lithuania, and Roth reported from Moscow. Thomas Gibbons-Neff in Tirana contributed to this report.



Is Russia Practicing a Dry Run for an Invasion of Belarus?

Paul McLeary | 1 hour ago

11-14 minutes

Eradication and interdiction are not foreign impositions, but essential pillars of any counternarcotics strategy,...

Russia does military exercises regularly, but this year's version, underway right now, deserves especially close attention. It's called Zapad ("West") and involves thousands of troops doing maneuvers on the borders of the Baltic states and Poland. The motivating scenario is to defend against an imagined invasion of Belarus by foreign-backed extremists. One of the fictional enemy states, "Vesbaria," seems to be a thinly disguised Lithuania; the other, "Lubenia," looks a bit like Poland. There will no doubt be the usual low-level provocations, with Russian planes buzzing borders, that will make the whole passive-aggressive show of strength look more like an invasion of the West than the other way around.

One extra element this time, however, is that these are joint exercises with Belarus, and not everyone in Belarus is happy to play host. The exercises are being staged in the northwest of the country, given the name of another fictional state, "Veyshnorja." This is the historical heartland of real Belarusian nationalism, where Belarusian activists in the early 20th century competed with Poles, Lithuanians, and Jews to claim the old Tsarist administrative region of Vilna. Unfortunately for the Belarusians, much of this became Vilnius, the capital of modern-day Lithuania. But the rest remains in the northwest of modern Belarus, with the division testament to the long-standing love-hate relationship between Baltic peoples and Belarusians. Hence the Baltic-style spelling of Veyshnorja.

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The United States is Losing the War on Drugs in the Americas

But the region also voted for President Aleksandr Lukashenko's main opponent, the nationalist Zianon Pazniak, the last time Belarus had a real competitive election, back in 1994. So Zapad is directed as much against an "internal enemy" as against NATO powers, namely nationalists backed by the West. And that, worryingly, is the same scenario that Russia claimed to detect in Ukraine in 2014.

Some Belarusians have had fun with this. Veyshnorja now has its own Twitter account. You can buy T-shirts and mugs. Some 7,000 people have applied for its passports.

But there's a serious aspect to all this, too. Russian exercises have a habit of becoming real. The Kavkaz ("Caucasus") maneuvers in 2008 were basically a dry run for the invasion of Georgia. The last version of Zapad in 2013 preceded Russian action against Ukraine. The most notorious exercise of all was in 1981, when massive maneuvers were used to intimidate Communist Poland into suppressing the Solidarity movement. The fear this time is that Russian troops might manufacture an excuse to stay behind. In which case, the same scenario of nationalist extremists could be used as an excuse to "save" Lukashenko or even depose him. The official figure of only 12,700 soldiers involved would not be enough to occupy Belarus, but other estimates are 10 times as high.

Other neighbors are equally alarmed. NATO now has revolving forward deployments in Poland and the Baltic states. The U.K. has 800 troops in Estonia, the United States up to 1,000 in Poland. Ukraine's official statement declares that "such exercises have been used repeatedly to achieve hidden

military-political goals.... Transition of the state border and military invasion into the territory of Ukraine is not excluded."

But Belarus bears the closest scrutiny. Tensions between Belarus and Russia have been growing acutely since 2014 — if not yet by enough for Belarus to dare to pull out of Zapad completely (though it has invited in neutral observers). In observing the exercises, the West would be wise not to treat Belarus as a potential belligerent but rather as an increasingly reluctant ally of Russia.

Lukashenko's priority has always been survival. Belarus's priority has always been protecting its sovereignty. The close relationship with Russia used to help on both counts. Now it is seen as laying Belarus open to the same kind of "hybrid war" or "active measures" used by Russia against Ukraine, especially as Moscow's definition of "loyalty" has grown ever more demanding since 2014.

Lukashenko has taken elementary precautions to try to ensure that his security services are more loyal to him than the Ukrainian equivalents were to former President Viktor Yanukovich. But this has proved a Sisyphean task, as they are so closely institutionally connected with Russia. Senior Belarusian officers and KGB (a name Belarus is still proud to use) still do their training in Russia.

Lukashenko has maneuvered to appear diplomatically neutral. The capital of Belarus has hosted the Minsk process on peace in Ukraine. Belarus has not backed Russia militarily over Crimea or in eastern Ukraine and has resisted fierce pressure for several years to host a Russian air base on its territory.

Lukashenko has tried to balance Russia by expanding his options with the West. Belarus had been under sanctions since a rigged election in 2010 and subsequent crackdown against protests. But all

political prisoners were released in August 2015. The EU then lifted its sanctions in February 2016 (though the United States was unable to follow, as its hands are more closely tied by the Belarus Democracy Act, passed in 2004). Lukashenko has sought loans, flirted with the IMF, and deepened relations with any organization that won't lecture him too hard about his democratic credentials. This year, Belarus took the chair of the Central European Initiative, and the city of Minsk hosted the Parliamentary Assembly for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. EU officials have explored ways to make Belarus a real, rather than nominal, member of its flagship Eastern Partnership policy. In just two days in July, no fewer than four separate EU delegations visited Minsk.

Lukashenko, who was indifferent or even hostile to traditional Belarusian nationalism before 2014, has quietly pushed a program of "soft Belarusianization." He has rejected Russian President Vladimir Putin's pet idea that Belarus is part of the "Russian world." Schoolbooks are being rewritten.

Lukashenko has endorsed pre-Soviet historiography beloved by nationalists, like the ancient history of Polatsk (in the north of Veyshnorja), as "our historical cradle ... a peaceful, hard-working, and friendly state," independent of both Moscow and Kiev. Lukashenko has even used Belarusian in public speeches, which is a first.

Peace has become Belarus's new brand. It appeals to a very conservative population and gives Belarus another card to play with the West by posing as a "donor of security in the European region." On a visit to Minsk in August, the streets were lined with state-sponsored billboards proclaiming, "We Belarusians are a peaceful people," which is also the first line of the national anthem.

Lukashenko doesn't want Ukrainian-style revolution either, but

this is a tougher task. Traditionally, Lukashenko, who has survived in power as a dictator since 1994, has bought political acquiescence with economic growth. For 20 years, Belarus was not booming exactly but avoided the extremes of social dislocation, corruption, and oligarchy seen in Russia and Ukraine. The economy grew fairly solidly until 2008. Its initial wobbles thereafter could initially be blamed on the global economic crisis, but severe systemic problems set in in 2014. GDP fell by 3.9 percent in 2015 and 2.6 percent in 2016.

The secret of Lukashenko's success was Russian subsidies — namely cheap oil and gas, though the benefit of these schemes was often split with Russian oligarchs. But, reeling under sanctions, Russia could no longer afford to be so generous. Moreover, it didn't want to be, so long as Belarus was not playing ball over foreign policy. Russia also had to sort its own economy out first, via a sudden and unilateral devaluation in 2014 that hit Belarusian exports hard. Both countries have also struggled with lower oil prices. Lukashenko's other main lifeline is the two modern oil refineries he inherited from the Soviet Union.

All this has undermined Lukashenko's social contract with his traditionally passive population. Outside of Minsk, provincial towns depend on big state employers, which now only offer lower wages and part-time work. Migrant work in Russia has collapsed. The new reality is that there are two Belaruses: Minsk has a booming IT industry, but in the regions people struggle by on average wages as low as \$150 a month.

This was the background to the unprecedented social unrest the regime faced this spring. Big demonstrations attracted thousands of people — and in small towns like Polatsk and Vitebsk, not just Minsk. The trigger was Lukashenko's misguided "parasite tax," a ham-fisted attempt to relieve pressure on the beleaguered state budget by forcing the economically "inactive" to pay a poll tax of about \$250. But the definition of "inactive" was extremely broad, including young mothers and those looking after relatives, netting about 450,000 people in a workforce of 4.5 million. The result was a revolt of "his people," rather than the traditional opposition, which Lukashenko had to allow breathing space. The decree was suspended but not

withdrawn — a revised version is due in late September. Hundreds of people were eventually arrested and given administrative fines, but there were no serious sentences, unlike in previous protests. The long-term problem wasn't solved.

Russia was reluctant to throw Belarus a lifeline. Compounded economic disputes have festered since 2014. The best that Lukashenko could get was a belated deal with Putin at St. Petersburg in April but with all sorts of strings attached. An additional loan of \$1 billion was promised. Gas prices were discounted through to the end of 2019. Crude oil supplies to Belarus's refineries were increased. But the hidden strings were unknown; Lukashenko spent most of the meeting alone with Putin. Belarus admitted that it had to pay arrears of \$726 million in gas payments. Putin suggested that Belarusian refined oil should be diverted to Russian rather than Baltic ports. Rumors flew of an unknown security agenda or of unfinished business due to be completed by pressure during Zapad. Putin himself has taken a moderate line, but Russian nationalist critics of Lukashenko are being given a lot of media space.

How should the West respond? There should be contingency planning if Russian troops do outstay their welcome. The West should be better placed than it was over Ukraine in 2014 to detect fake scenarios (attacks on Russian troops, incursions over Baltic or Ukrainian borders) or invented excuses to impose a de facto Russian base in Belarus.

In the longer term, the West should remember that supporting dictators for reasons of realpolitik doesn't always work out well. Whatever Lukashenko's desire for a more "balanced" foreign policy, he hasn't liberalized his country's domestic politics. (It has even maintained the death penalty, the last country in Europe to do so.) But Belarus has to change. Its economic model is unsustainable, its security strategy extremely fragile. The West should encourage Belarus to take every small step in the direction of reform and proper sovereignty. The West should also encourage Russia not to overreact to such steps while preparing for it to do just that.

Photo credit: ALEXANDER NEMENOV/AFP/Getty Images



Miller : Ukraine Has Many Problems, and Only One of Them Is Russia

Judith Miller
6-8 minutes

Sept. 18, 2017 6:48 p.m. ET

Kiev, Ukraine

Ukraine will soon enter the fourth year of a low-intensity war with Russia. More than 7% of its territory remains occupied by its aggressive neighbor. Will Ukraine survive as a free, independent, pro-Western nation?

"It's 50-50," a veteran European diplomat who knows the region well told me this weekend in Kiev. His gloomy assessment was echoed by many of the 350 current and former officials, academics, businessmen and journalists attending the 14th annual Yalta European Strategy conference, a two-day gathering sponsored by pro-Western oligarch Victor Pinchuk that has become a popular stop on Europe's conference circuit. While Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko expressed confidence in his country's future, concerns surfaced repeatedly at the meeting's sessions and more often in quiet, candid conversations.

To its credit, Ukraine has overcome challenges that could have destroyed a less determined

country. Russia's invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its continuing occupation of part of the Donbas region, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, initially threatened to turn the country into a financial and political basket case. After the invasion, gross domestic product fell 17%, inflation soared to more than 60%, and Ukraine's currency lost nearly 60% of its value. Yet after two years of contraction, Ukraine's economy stabilized in 2016 and has started growing again. According to World Bank projections, it will grow by 3.5% in 2018 and 4% in 2019. Moody's recently upgraded Ukraine's creditworthiness from stable to positive. And this week, Ukraine is returning to the sovereign debt market by issuing \$2.5 billion in new Eurobonds, the most important reflection to date of its remarkable recovery.

Much of this is due not only to Western aid and \$17.5 billion from the International Monetary Fund, but to government reform that has boosted investor confidence. Since Mr. Poroshenko's election in 2014, Ukraine has adopted a business-friendly tax code, closed failing banks and recapitalized others, raised domestic energy tariffs, and enacted a more transparent public procurement system. It has negotiated a free-trade agreement

with the European Union, and in June Ukrainians began enjoying visa-free travel to EU countries.

Ukraine is no longer dependent on Russian natural gas, which before 2013 accounted for more than 99% of its supplies. Finally, the country boasts a cantankerous free press and vibrant civil society, empowered by the Euro-Maidan Revolution, the mass public protests in Kiev's main square in 2014 that prompted the corrupt, pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich to flee the country.

Yet all is not rosy. Corruption remains endemic and the pace of reform has slowed. Ukraine's civil service ranks second-lowest in effectiveness in Europe, just above Moldova, according to the World Bank Governance Indicators. Government pledges of land reform and the privatization of some of the 3,300 state enterprises have not been implemented. Discontent is widespread and growing.

"The government has done a lot, but not enough," Svitlana Zalizchuk, a young member of Ukraine's Parliament, told participants at the conference. "Reform postponed," warned Suma Chakrabarti, head of the European Bank for Reconstruction and

Development, "is transformation [to a post-Soviet society] postponed."

In 2014, under heavy pressure from Western governments and the IMF, Ukraine's government created a new independent National Anti-Corruption Bureau. Kiev also empowered a special prosecutor, who has since opened hundreds of corruption cases. Yet VoxUkraine, a nonpartisan research group critical of the government, asserted that due to corruption in the court system, only three senior officials have actually been jailed since 2016. Prosecutor General Yuri Lutsenko told the conference that three bribe-takers were being prosecuted every day, but even he complained about the delay in creating a special anticorruption court.

Mr. Poroshenko is himself the subject of many corruption rumors and complaints. "The president has not helped overcome corruption," Ms. Zalizchuk asserted last week. Storefronts featuring the chocolate brand Roshen, which helped make Mr. Poroshenko an oligarch, are ubiquitous in the capital. And despite the war, the president stopped making chocolate in Russia only after President Vladimir Putin moved to shut his factory down. Several Ukrainians told me they think their president views his office

as a business opportunity first and foremost.

Ukraine spends \$5 billion, or 5% of gross domestic product, on defense. Mr. Poroshenko's appointment of two former business partners to key posts related to military spending has sparked war profiteering charges. "The president is one of the main beneficiaries of the defense budget," Oksana Syroyid, a member of Parliament, told the Kyiv Post.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Córdoba

7-9 minutes

Updated Sept. 19, 2017 5:40 a.m. ET

FAJARDO, Puerto Rico—Hurricane Maria barreled into the eastern Caribbean late Monday as a dangerous Category 5 storm, ripping roofs from homes, knocking out electricity on the island of Dominica and threatening others in the region already ravaged by Hurricane Irma.

The storm made landfall in Dominica around 9:15 p.m. ET, with maximum sustained winds near 160 miles an hour, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. The storm is expected to move toward Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands late Tuesday and Wednesday.

The hurricane center said that while some fluctuations in intensity are likely in the next day or two—with Maria briefly downgraded to a Category 4 storm before being raised again early Tuesday—the storm is forecast to remain extremely dangerous.

Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit said in posts on his Facebook page that the strong winds ripped the roof off his house, and that the house was flooding, adding shortly afterward that he had been rescued.

"The winds are merciless! We shall survive by the grace of God," he posted.

In another post early Tuesday he said initial reports were of "widespread devastation" and that "so far we have lost all what money can buy and replace." Mr. Skerrit said his focus was now on rescuing the trapped and securing medical assistance for the injured, fearing possible deaths as a result of likely landslides.

On Monday, the prime minister had urged people in flood-prone areas

If demography is destiny, Ukraine also has cause for concern. In this country of 45 million, the annual death rate exceeds the number of live births. Martin Schumacher, the German CEO of wholesaler Metro Cash & Carry Ukraine, estimates that as many as 200,000 Ukrainians, often young and skilled, emigrate each year. "There is virtually no immigration," he said. A tech worker can make three times his Ukrainian salary in Poland. In

Germany, he added, salaries are almost 10 times higher.

The number of young political activists is shrinking as well, said Aivaras Abromavicius, Ukraine's former minister for economic development and trade. Whereas 60 of the country's 3,000 graduates of Western schools had senior posts in government a year ago, only about 10 do today. Young activists have become discouraged about the prospects of reform from

within, Mr. Abromavicius told me after a conference session. "There are islands of reform and hope," he said, "but we need more of them."

Ms. Miller is a contributing editor of City Journal and a Fox News contributor.

Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition.

Hurricane Maria Devastates Dominica, Menaces Puerto Rico

Dudley Althaus and José de

to move to safety with friends or relatives, or into shelters.

"This is not a time for heroism," he said at a press conference.

Several callers to Dominica radio reported strong winds and rain, and loss of electrical power and damage to roofs.

Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló has said the storm posed a "serious menace" to the island. Officials on the outlying islands that Maria is expected to slam first also issued warnings Monday.

Although Maria is currently tracking south of the islands devastated by Hurricane Irma two weeks ago, tropical storm-force winds and rain are expected to hit St. Martin and the U.S. Virgin Islands this week.

Maria's current path is expected to take it 22 miles south of St. Croix, the southernmost U.S. Virgin Island that was largely spared the previous storm's wrath.

But Gov. Kenneth Mapp of the U.S. Virgin Islands warned residents Monday that the storm could easily shift direction. Even tropical storm force-winds and rain can cause a lot of destruction, especially on St. Thomas and St. John, which suffered heavy damage from Irma.

"Just remember this is a live animal," Mr. Mapp warned the territory's 105,000 residents in a televised briefing. "Do not take any comfort at this point that we are going to be out of hurricane-force winds."

"At the end of the day, my friends, this is still going to be a very dangerous hurricane," he said.

Hurricane Maria is aimed directly at the islands that were expected to pick up much of the cruise ship and other tourism business lost on Anguilla and St. Martin.

Forecasters were warning of hurricane conditions for Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique and St. Kitts, Nevis and Montserrat on Monday. They advised Puerto Rico, where electricity remains off in

some areas because of Irma's glancing blow, to monitor the storm closely.

"We are screwed," said Luis Díaz, who operates a taxi service in Fajardo, a port town on Puerto Rico's northeastern coast. He said Maria's trajectory was similar to Hurricane Hugo, which devastated the island in 1989, leaving parts of Puerto Rico without power for seven months.

Predicting as much as a foot of rain in some places, the National Hurricane Center said Hurricane Maria's "rainfall on all of these islands could cause life-threatening flash floods and mudslides."

Irma, a Category 5 storm when it slammed into the northern Caribbean early this month, killed at least 38 people on the islands, damaged or destroyed as much as 90% of the homes and other buildings in some places and stripped the land bare of lush tropical foliage.

Maria's approach raised the anxiety level over the weekend among residents of the Virgin Islands and others hit by Irma, many of whom have been nearly two weeks without electricity and roofs. Many of the aid flights and boats bringing food, water and other supplies to the stricken islands have been launched from Puerto Rico.

"We're being vigilant. We have systems, we have experience and we have strength. We also have faith," Hugh Riley, secretary-general of the Barbados-based Caribbean Tourism Organization, said as Maria approached the Leeward Islands.

"Protecting ourselves and our guests is now today's priority," said Mr. Riley, whose organization represents hotels and other businesses on the vulnerable islands. "Tomorrow we'll resume the cleanup and rebuilding process."

Meanwhile, Hurricane Jose, which had threatened the northern Caribbean a few days after Irma before turning north into the Atlantic, is moving slowly offshore of

the central U.S. Atlantic Coast. Although they expect Jose to remain at sea, forecasters are warning of dangerously heavy surf along the New Jersey coast northward in the coming days.

People in the tiny two-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda, the first to be hit by Irma, were busy preparing for the possible impact of Maria.

Nearly all of Barbuda's 1,800 residents had already been evacuated 25 miles south to Antigua and remain there, staying in government shelters or with friends and relatives, Philmore Mullin, the director of emergency response, said Sunday.

"We're keeping a very close eye on Maria and making preparations," Mr. Mullin said.

On St. John, one of the U.S. Virgin Islands worst hit by Irma, a feeling of dread was palpable at a town hall meeting Saturday to discuss relief efforts in the wake of Irma and the new storm.

"We are strongly encouraging the residents of St. John who are able to do so to evacuate," said Ryan West, a spokesman for Love City Strong, an ad hoc citizen's group that has played a key role in organizing boat evacuations from St. John and disaster relief to the island from Puerto Rico after Irma.

Some people at the meeting gasped while others sat in stunned silence. "It's a slap in the face," said one woman in flip-flops.

The island is a favorite winter gathering place for vacationing millionaires and independent-minded sail boat skippers.

"I feel very fearful for my husband," said Tonia Lovejoy, 37 years old, who left Saturday with her 4-month-old daughter on a Puerto Rico-bound boat. Her husband stayed behind to repair the couple's 36-foot sailboat on which they live. "If another storm is coming, he should leave. We are already living on a thin thread," she said.

"This is bad," said Stephen Tilas, a 51-year-old property manager who changed his plans after hearing about Maria's threatening trajectory. Instead of beginning to repair the

damaged villas he oversees, Mr. Tilas again closed his own house to prepare for the new storm.

—Anthony Harrup contributed to this article.

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Emine Erdoğan : The world cannot ignore the plight of Rohingya Muslims

Emine Erdoğan

5-7 minutes

Story highlights

- The Rohingya Muslims, an ancient community in Myanmar and currently the largest group of stateless people in the world, have been at risk for decades, writes Emine Erdoğan, Turkey's first lady.

Emine Erdoğan is the First Lady of the Republic of Turkey. The opinions in this article belong to the author.

(CNN)The Rohingya Muslims, an ancient community in Myanmar and currently the largest group of stateless people in the world, have been at risk for decades.

A recent increase in violent attacks against this minority, however, has claimed more than 1,000 lives since August 25 and has forced tens of thousands of civilians to

seek refuge in neighboring Bangladesh

. To prevent what could possibly be the next genocide, Turkey has stepped up its diplomatic and humanitarian efforts in the area. Before it's too late, other world leaders must follow suit.

The Rohingya Muslim community's plight did not start yesterday. Having been deprived of citizenship under the 1982 citizenship law, members of that minority are prohibited from taking part in civil and political life -- banned from voting and holding office in Myanmar. To make matters worse, they live under dire economic conditions that affect all aspects of everyday life.

To be clear, what has been happening in Myanmar represents a clear violation of

Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

, which stipulates that the national government must protect and respect the human rights of everyone regardless of their race, color, sex, language, religious convictions, opinions and origins.

Likewise, the arbitrary restrictions on the Rohingya community's rights are incompatible with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

In recent years,

there has been an uptick in violence

against Rohingya Muslims, which has resulted in mass displacement and a large number of casualties. In 2012, when I first traveled to Myanmar, close to 200 people -- most of them Rohingya Muslims -- had been killed in clashes. Over the past year the security situation further deteriorated as tens of thousands of people had to choose between near-certain death and seeking refuge in neighboring Bangladesh, which faces major economic challenges itself.

The humanitarian crisis is impossible to ignore: According to the International Organization for Migration, more than 18,500 Rohingya Muslims had arrived at

Bangladeshi refugee camps by the end of August

. The United Nations now puts that number at

more than 400,000

During my visit to the Kutupalong refugee camp near the Bangladesh-Myanmar border last week, Rohingya Muslims -- most of them women and children -- told me haunting stories about the deaths of their relatives and loved ones. Some were forced to watch as their husbands were executed. Others saw their villages being burned to the ground. It was clear that they depended on the compassion of others to survive.

Turkey's approach to the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar reflects our proven commitment to assist fellow human beings in need. As of today, our country remains the world's

second-largest provider of humanitarian assistance

. In addition to hosting close to three million Syrian and Iraqi refugees within our borders,

to whom \$25 billion worth of services

and aid has been provided since 2011, we have helped to address crises in distant parts of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

Turkey follows the most recent developments in Myanmar with deep concern. However, expressing concern alone isn't enough to make a difference on the ground.

In an effort to address pressing problems in the area, Turkey has taken a number of diplomatic and humanitarian steps in recent weeks. Having reached out to the leaders of Bangladesh and Myanmar,

we delivered 1,000 tons of humanitarian aid

to the Rohingya Muslim refugees.

Last week, I personally oversaw the distribution of humanitarian aid and

spoke with survivors and eyewitnesses. At the same time, we pledged to cover the costs of hosting Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh and

expressed our intentions

to build new housing at the border to improve the living standards of refugees.

Turkey, however, cannot be reasonably expected to address the situation alone. This is why world leaders must follow suit and get behind a comprehensive, long-term strategy to broker a permanent solution.

As a first step, we must ensure the safety of Rohingya Muslims by offering financial incentives to the government of Bangladesh, which remains the only safe haven for the persecuted minority. Moving forward, the international community must work with the government of Myanmar to ensure the Rohingya Muslim community will be granted citizenship and their safe return to their native land is guaranteed.

The fact that Rohingya Muslims live in a remote part of the world doesn't make their lives less valuable, their experiences less painful or the situation less dire.

Humanity must not fail the Rohingya Muslims as it failed the hundreds of thousands of innocent people who perished in Srebrenica and Rwanda. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, along with officials from our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others, are fully committed to finding a solution. As for the rest of the world, the time to act is now.

ETATS-UNIS



With a Picked Lock and a Threatened Indictment, Mueller's Inquiry Sets a Tone (UNE)

Sharon LaFraniere, Matt Apuzzo 11-14 minutes and Adam Goldman

Paul J. Manafort, President Trump's former campaign chairman, in June

2016. Prosecutors in the Russia investigation told Mr. Manafort they planned to indict him, two people close to the investigation said. Brendan McDermid/Reuters

WASHINGTON — Paul J. Manafort was in bed early one morning in July when federal agents bearing a search warrant picked the lock on his front door and raided his Virginia home. They took binders stuffed with documents and copied his computer files, looking for evidence that Mr. Manafort, President Trump's former campaign chairman, set up secret offshore bank accounts. They even photographed the expensive suits in his closet.

The special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, then followed the house search with a warning: His prosecutors told Mr. Manafort they planned to indict him, said two people close to the investigation.

The moves against Mr. Manafort are just a glimpse of the aggressive tactics used by Mr. Mueller and his team of prosecutors in the four months since taking over the Justice Department's investigation into Russia's attempts to disrupt last year's election, according to lawyers, witnesses and American officials who have described the approach. Dispensing with the plodding pace typical of many white-collar investigations, Mr. Mueller's team has used what some describe as shock-and-awe tactics to intimidate witnesses and potential targets of the inquiry.

Mr. Mueller has obtained a flurry of subpoenas to compel witnesses to testify before a grand jury, lawyers and witnesses say, sometimes before his prosecutors have taken the customary first step of interviewing them. One witness was called before the grand jury less than a month after his name surfaced in news accounts. The special counsel even took the unusual step of obtaining a subpoena for one of Mr. Manafort's former lawyers, claiming an exception to the rule that shields attorney-client discussions from scrutiny.

"They are setting a tone. It's important early on to strike terror in the hearts of people in Washington, or else you will be rolled," said Solomon L. Wisenberg, who was deputy independent counsel in the investigation that led to the impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton in 1999. "You want people saying to themselves, 'Man, I had better tell these guys the truth.'"

A spokesman for Mr. Mueller declined to comment. Lawyers and a spokesman for Mr. Manafort also declined to comment.

Few people can upend Washington like a federal prosecutor rooting around a presidential administration, and Mr. Mueller, a former F.B.I. director, is known to dislike meandering investigations that languish for years. At the same time, he appears to be taking a broad view of his mandate: examining not just the Russian disruption campaign and whether any of Mr. Trump's associates assisted in the effort, but also any financial entanglements with Russians going back several years. He is also investigating whether Mr. Trump tried to obstruct justice when he fired James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director.

Mr. Manafort is under investigation for possible violations of tax laws, money-laundering prohibitions and requirements to disclose foreign lobbying. Michael T. Flynn, the former national security adviser, is being scrutinized for foreign lobbying work as well as for conversations he had last year with Russia's ambassador to the United States. On Monday, Mr. Flynn's siblings announced the creation of a legal-defense fund to help cover their brother's "enormous" legal fees.

The wide-ranging nature of Mr. Mueller's investigation could put him on a collision course with Mr. Trump, who has said publicly that Mr. Mueller should keep his investigation narrowly focused on last year's presidential campaign. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Mr. Trump said Mr. Mueller would be overstepping his boundaries if he investigated his family's finances unrelated to Russia.

Mr. Manafort's apartment in Alexandria, Va., was searched in July. Win McNamee/Getty Images

For the moment, Mr. Mueller's team has shown a measure of deference to White House officials, sparing them grand jury subpoenas and allowing them to appear for voluntary interviews. Those sessions are expected to begin soon. Ty Cobb, a lawyer brought in to manage the White House response to the inquiry, has told administration officials that he wants to avoid any subpoenas from the special prosecutor.

Staff members have been working long hours answering Mr. Mueller's request for 13 categories of documents, including records related to Mr. Comey's firing and Mr. Trump's role in drafting a misleading statement about a June 2016 meeting between campaign officials and Russian-born visitors. Nonetheless, the demand for documents has provoked at least one angry confrontation between

Mr. Cobb and Donald F. McGahn II, the White House counsel, over whether certain documents should be withheld to protect the president's right to confidentiality.

But associates of both Mr. Manafort and Mr. Flynn have received more peremptory treatment. Instead of invitations to the prosecutor's office, they have been presented with grand jury subpoenas, forcing them to either testify or take the Fifth Amendment and raise suspicions that they had something to hide. At least three witnesses have recently been subpoenaed to testify about Mr. Manafort: Jason Maloni, a spokesman who appeared before the grand jury for more than two hours on Friday, and the heads of two consulting firms — Mercury Public Affairs and the Podesta Group — who worked with Mr. Manafort on behalf of Viktor F. Yanukovich, the pro-Russia former president of Ukraine.

Mr. Mueller's team also took the unusual step of issuing a subpoena to Melissa Laurenza, a specialist in lobbying law who formerly represented Mr. Manafort, according to people familiar with the subpoena. Conversations between lawyers and their clients are normally considered bound by attorney-client privilege, but there are exceptions when lawyers prepare public documents that are filed on behalf of their client.

Mr. Mueller took over the Russia investigation in May, after the F.B.I. had already spent nearly a year looking into connections between Mr. Trump's associates and Russians. His team has occasionally been caught by surprise, hearing of possibly important information only when it is revealed in the news media.

This was the case in July, when Mr. Mueller's prosecutors learned about email exchanges between Donald Trump Jr. and an emissary for a Kremlin-connected Russian oligarch only after they were disclosed in *The New York Times*, according to a law enforcement official who spoke on condition of anonymity. Donald Trump Jr., the president's son, set up the Trump Tower meeting to receive what he was told would be damaging information about Hillary Clinton from the Russian government.

Soon after his name surfaced, one of the Russian-born participants at the meeting, Rinat Akhmetshin, was ordered to testify before the grand jury, according to one of Mr. Akhmetshin's associates.

"They seem to be pursuing this more aggressively, taking a much harder line, than you'd expect to see in a typical white-collar case,"

said Jimmy Gurulé, a Notre Dame law professor and former federal prosecutor. "This is more consistent with how you'd go after an organized crime syndicate."

The tactics reflect some of the hard-charging — and polarizing — personalities of Mr. Mueller's team, seasoned prosecutors with experience investigating financial fraud, money laundering and organized crime.

Robert S. Mueller III, a former F.B.I. director, is known to dislike meandering investigations that languish for years. Doug Mills/The New York Times

Admirers of Andrew Weissmann, one of the team's senior prosecutors, describe him as relentless and uncompromising, while his detractors say his scorched earth tactics have backfired in some previous cases. Greg B. Andres, another one of Mr. Mueller's prosecutors, once ran an investigation into a Mafia kingpin. Zainab N. Ahmad made her name as a prosecutor pursuing high-profile terrorism cases.

Some lawyers defending people who have been caught up in Mr. Mueller's investigation privately complain that the special counsel's team is unwilling to engage in the usual back-and-forth that precedes — or substitutes for — grand jury testimony. They argue that the team's more aggressive tactics might end up being counterproductive, especially if some grand jury witnesses turn out to be more guarded than they would have been in a more informal setting or invoke the Fifth Amendment.

The longer Mr. Mueller's investigation goes on, the more vulnerable he will be to allegations that he is on a fishing expedition, said Katy Harriger, a professor of politics at Wake Forest University and the author of a book on special prosecutors. Such accusations dogged the investigation of Kenneth W. Starr, the independent counsel whose investigation of Mr. Clinton stretched on for years.

To a degree, Mr. Mueller is in a race against three congressional committees that are interviewing some of the same people who are of interest to the special prosecutor's team. Even if the committees refuse to grant them immunity, congressional testimony that becomes public can give other witnesses a chance to line up their stories.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said committee staff members were

going to great lengths not to get in Mr. Mueller's way. But Senator Charles E. Grassley, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, indicated last week that his committee might subpoena witnesses to testify about the circumstances of Mr. Comey's firing even over Mr. Mueller's objections.

Mr. Mueller's need to navigate this complex landscape could explain the timing of the raid on Mr. Manafort's house, which took place in the early hours of July 26. The

raid came one day after Mr. Manafort was interviewed by staff members of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

On the day of the raid, Mr. Manafort was scheduled to talk to the Senate Judiciary Committee, an interview that was eventually canceled.

It is unusual for a prosecutor to seek a search warrant against someone who, like Mr. Manafort, had already put his lawyer in contact with the Justice Department. No search warrants

were executed during the investigations by Mr. Starr or Patrick J. Fitzgerald, a special counsel appointed during the George W. Bush administration to investigate the leak of the name of a C.I.A. officer.

To get the warrant, Mr. Mueller's team had to show probable cause that Mr. Manafort's home contained evidence of a crime. To be allowed to pick the lock and enter the home unannounced, prosecutors had to persuade a federal judge that Mr.

Manafort was likely to destroy evidence.

Said Mr. Gurulé, the former federal prosecutor, "Clearly they didn't trust him."

Correction: September 19, 2017

An earlier version of a picture caption with this article misstated the middle initial of President Trump's former campaign chairman. He is Paul J. Manafort, not Paul D.



Facebook's openness on Russia questioned by congressional investigators (UNE)

By Carol D. Leonnig, Elizabeth Dvoskin and Craig Timberg

9-11 minutes

According to people familiar with Facebook's findings, company officials told congressional investigators on Sept. 6 that they discovered political ads on its site bought by a Russian company during the 2016 election. Facebook told congressional investigators on Sept. 6 that they discovered political ads on its site bought by a Russian company during the 2016 election. (The Washington Post)

According to people familiar with Facebook's findings, company officials told congressional investigators on Sept. 6 that they discovered political ads on its site bought by a Russian company during the 2016 election. (The Washington Post)

House and Senate investigators have grown increasingly concerned that Facebook is withholding key information that could illuminate the shape and extent of a Russian propaganda campaign aimed at tilting the U.S. presidential election, according to people familiar with the probe.

Among the information Capitol Hill investigators are seeking is the full internal draft report from an inquiry the company conducted this spring into Russian election meddling but did not release at the time, said these people who, like others interviewed for this story, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss matters under investigation.

A 13-page "white paper" that Facebook published in April drew from this fuller internal report but left out critical details about how the Russian operation worked and how Facebook discovered it, according to people briefed on its contents.

Investigators believe the company has not fully examined all potential ways that Russians could have manipulated Facebook's sprawling social media platform.

A particularly sore point among Hill investigators is that Facebook has shared more extensive information — including ads bought through fake Russian accounts — with special counsel Robert S. Mueller III, who is conducting a separate probe into alleged coordination between Russia and President Trump's campaign.

Some members of the House and Senate intelligence committees were irritated that Facebook staff showed them copies of the ads but would not let the committees keep the documents for further study.

"It's always a little problematic when you come before a committee and show them documents and then take them back," said Sen. Mark R. Warner (Va.), the ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee. "My hope is they will be more cooperative going forward."

Facebook spokesman Tom Reynolds said the company has worked to be as transparent as possible.

"We have voluntarily and proactively briefed both members and committee staff and look forward to continued cooperation," he said. "Federal law and the ongoing investigation may limit what we can release publicly."

The investigators' frustrations follow Facebook's announcement earlier this month that accounts traced to a shadowy Russian Internet company had purchased at least \$100,000 in ads during the 2016 election season.

Warner and his Democratic counterpart on the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Adam B. Schiff of California, have been increasingly vocal in recent days

about their frustrations with Facebook.

Congressional investigators are questioning whether the Facebook review that yielded those findings was sufficiently thorough.

They said some of the ad purchases that Facebook has unearthed so far had obvious Russian fingerprints, including Russian addresses and payments made in rubles, the Russian currency.

Investigators are pushing Facebook to use its powerful data-crunching ability to track relationships among accounts and ad purchases that may not be as obvious, with the goal of potentially detecting subtle patterns of behavior and content shared by several Facebook users or advertisers.

Such connections — if they exist and can be discovered — might make clear the nature and reach of the Russian propaganda campaign and whether there was collusion between foreign and domestic political actors. Investigators also are pushing for fuller answers from Google and Twitter, both of which may have been targets of Russian propaganda efforts during the 2016 campaign, according to several independent researchers and Hill investigators.

"The internal analysis Facebook has done [on Russian ads] has been very helpful, but we need to know if it's complete," Schiff said. "I don't think Facebook fully knows the answer yet."

Google spokeswoman Andrea Faville said the company is "always monitoring for abuse or violations of our policies and we've seen no evidence this type of ad campaign was run on our platforms." A Twitter spokesman declined to comment. Warner said Twitter plans to brief lawmakers in the coming weeks.

Trump and campaign officials have denied any coordination with Russia

during the election. Russian President Vladimir Putin also has denied intervening to help get Trump elected.

Facebook began examining the ads following a May visit to Silicon Valley by Warner, who at the time asked executives if they had examined whether Russians used the company's advertising system, according to people briefed on the discussions.

The delay in probing the possibility that Russians had used Facebook's multibillion-dollar advertising system in its propaganda campaign has frustrated outside experts, who say the company has been slow to recognize the seriousness of the issues.

"All I can say is, 'Wow,'" said Zeynep Tufekci, an associate professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who studies social media companies' impact on society and governments. "Given the scale of the misinformation campaign, it's pretty obvious that ads would be a vector. They are an ad company."

Warner said the company still has not yet gone far enough, noting that Facebook shut down 50,000 accounts and pages in France ahead of the July election of President Emmanuel Macron because of concerns that they were fake and violated Facebook policy. So far Facebook has reported shutting down 470 that it traced to ad purchases during the U.S. election cycle.

"When I was raising this issue, they were kind of dismissive," Warner said. "They took down 50,000 accounts in France. I find it hard to believe they've only been able to identify 470 accounts in America."

Warner said his committee has asked Facebook new questions that he hopes prompt the company to embark on a deeper investigation. Congressional investigators last

week asked Facebook, for example, to investigate whether other "troll farms" identified in Belarus, Macedonia and Estonia also used Facebook pages and ads, congressional staffers said.

When Facebook began studying its political ads in May, questions about the use of the social-media platform as a propaganda tool had been circulating for many months. Days after the November election, chief executive Mark Zuckerberg called the notion that manipulation of Facebook had influenced the election a "crazy idea."

The company's report in April didn't mention Russia directly saying, "Facebook is not in a position to make definitive attribution to the actors sponsoring this activity."

But the company seemed to suggest that it knew more information,

noting that its data "did not contradict" assertions from intelligence agencies in January that Russia engaged in a vast campaign to manipulate the U.S. election and used its digital arsenal to do so.

In the white paper, Facebook noted new techniques the company had adopted to trace propaganda and disinformation.

Facebook said it was using a data-mining technique known as machine learning to detect patterns of suspicious behavior. The company said its systems could detect "repeated posting of the same content" or huge spikes in the volume of content created as signals of attempts to manipulate the platform.

As recently as July 20, a Facebook spokesman told CNN, "We have seen no evidence that Russian

actors bought ads on Facebook in connection with the election."

A Facebook official said Monday that the statement was "accurate at the time we shared it," noting that the Russian ads were discovered in the more recent review.

Evening Edition newsletter

The day's most important stories.

Under federal law, it is illegal for a foreign national or corporation to make a contribution or expenditure "in connection with a Federal, State, or local election."

Facebook officials have said that most of the ads made no explicit reference in favor of Trump or Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton. Campaign finance experts said it is impossible to know whether the ads paid for by a Russian company broke the law

without analyzing the content of the ads themselves.

If the ads were overtly political — that is to say, they advocated the election or defeat of a specific candidate — then they would violate the prohibition on foreign national spending, legal experts said.

However, Russian-financed ads could have still run afoul of election law if they were placed on Facebook or targeted at certain voters in coordination with a campaign — one of the central questions of the ongoing Russia probes. In that scenario, the ads would not have to explicitly advocate for a candidate to be illegal.

Dwoskin reported from San Francisco. Matea Gold and Tom Hamburger contributed to this report.



Editorial : With Russia investigation of Trump campaign, plenty to see here

The Editorial Board, USA TODAY

4-5 minutes

Fireworks keep popping up, and smoke is wafting over the Trump White House: Our view

Protest sign depicting puppet President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Philadelphia in February 2017. (Photo: Mark Makela, Getty Images)

President Trump and his acolytes keep telling Americans to pay no heed to allegations that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia to interfere in last year's election.

Former chief strategist Steve Bannon told *60 Minutes* the investigation is a "waste of time" and a "farce." Trump's tweets have variously described the Russia investigation as fake news, fabricated or a "total scam."

It's all reminiscent of the old *Naked Gun* comedy, where police detective Frank Drebin stands in front of an exploding house full of fireworks and tells a gaggle of observers: "Nothing to see here, please disperse."

ROGER STONE: Russian collusion? It's a delusion

Actually, the longer special prosecutor Robert Mueller, Congress and the news media look at this scandal, the more Roman candles light up the sky. Even as Russia news has been eclipsed in

recent weeks by hurricanes and North Korean missile tests, explosive new evidence continues to emerge:

- At the same time Trump was running for the Republican presidential nomination, his business organization was secretly pursuing a multimillion dollar real estate deal in Russia, an adversarial nation. "Our boy can become president of the USA and we can engineer it," Russian-born business associate Felix Sater gushed in an email to a Trump lawyer over the Trump Tower Moscow project he was promoting. "I will get all of (Putin's) team to buy in on this." The project never got off the ground, but not for a lack of trying by Team Trump.
- Russia's attack on American democracy went beyond the hacking and leaking of Democratic campaign emails, which were discussed several times last summer by longtime Trump adviser Roger Stone, who denies collusion. The meddling also included efforts to compromise the computer election-related systems of 21 states; the spreading of fake, divisive news by Kremlin-run or

Kremlin-financed media outlets; and the purchase of \$100,000 in ads on Facebook. All were aimed at favoring Trump, harming Hillary Clinton or generally creating divisions within the electorate.

- Countless meetings took place between Russian proxies and Trump campaign officials, who conveniently forgot or failed to mention the meetings until presented with proof they took place. Among the most curious was the get-together on June 9, 2016, among Donald Trump Jr., then-Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort, son-in-law Jared Kushner and a Russian lawyer to hear about potential dirt on Hillary Clinton. "I love it," Donald Jr. enthused in an email anticipating the meeting. He later said nothing came of it, but it sure smells like attempted collusion.
- The saga of former national security adviser Michael Flynn grows ever more tawdry, with reports that Flynn served as a consultant on Middle East nuclear power plants involving Russian companies. Flynn

remains a central figure in the Russia investigation. His misrepresentations about repeated contacts with the Russian ambassador before becoming NSC adviser led to his resignation. Trump asked FBI Director James Comey to back off on investigating Flynn and then fired Comey, a move that led to the appointment of Mueller as special prosecutor and the humiliation of Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who, according to a report in *The New York Times*, was called an "idiot" by Trump for giving up oversight of the Russian probe.

Mueller's potential targets of opportunity — as he convenes a grand jury, issues subpoenas and conducts raids — are multiplying by the week. There's the broader Russian election-interference campaign. Then there's Flynn and now his son, Michael G. Flynn, as well as Manafort, Donald Jr., Trump's family finances and more.

This fireworks show continues to get bigger, and smoke from it is wafting over the Trump White House.



Roger Stone: Russian collusion? It's a delusion

Roger Stone
Published 7:13

p.m. ET Sept. 18, 2017

3 minutes

Leaks and allegations show intelligence agencies have been politicized: Opposing view

Roger Stone at his book signing in Boca Raton, Fla., on March 21, 2017. (Photo: Joe Raedle, Getty Images)

Next Tuesday, I will testify before the House Intelligence Committee in its ongoing investigation into whether Donald Trump, his family, campaign or associates colluded with the Russian government to influence the outcome of the 2016 election.

I am testifying voluntarily and have not requested or received a grant of immunity. I have been eager to do so since several members of the committee made allegations in public session that I had advance notice of either the hacking of Hillary Clinton campaign Chairman John Podesta's emails or of the content of material published by WikiLeaks that proved embarrassing to the Clinton campaign. FactCheck.org, a non-partisan news organization, reported that those allegations are not established by the record.

The torrent of leaks and allegations from our intelligence agencies on the question of Russian collusion demonstrates the extent to which these agencies have been politicized. Repetition of the mantra that "the Russians colluded with the

Trump campaign" does not make it true.

OUR VIEW: With Russia investigation, plenty to see here

The New York Times reported in January that intelligence agencies are examining emails, records of financial transactions and intercepted communications as part of an investigation into possible links between Russian officials and former Trump associates, including me. *The Times*, the Senate and House intelligence committees and our intelligence services have yet to make public any incriminating materials for a simple reason: They do not exist.

In addition, the reported meeting between Donald Trump Jr. and a Russian attorney who claimed to have documentation of malfeasance

by Hillary Clinton was neither improper nor illegal.

I believe that the entire allegation of Russian collusion with the Trump campaign is the brainchild of Clinton operative John Podesta, most likely to distract from the lucrative business contracts that he and his brother enjoyed with the oligarchs around Vladimir Putin. In short, the claim of Russian collusion with Trump is a politically motivated fairy tale.

Roger Stone is a longtime political consultant and adviser to President Trump.



Senate Republicans Consider a Trillion-Dollar-Plus Tax Cut for Budget (UNE)

Richard Rubin and Siobhan Hughes

7-8 minutes

Updated Sept. 18, 2017 10:20 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Senate Republicans are considering writing a budget that would allow for up to \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts over the next decade, said people familiar with the discussions.

Budget talks are continuing and no final decision has been reached yet.

A budget that creates fiscal room for a \$1.5 trillion tax cut, if adopted, would then be followed by a tax bill that would specify rate cuts and other policy changes that don't exceed that figure. Calling for a tax cut in the budget would let Republicans lower tax rates while making fewer tough decisions on what tax breaks to eliminate to help pay for the cuts.

Republicans contend that some expiring tax cuts would have been extended anyway and that their plan would boost economic growth and generate revenue, reducing the actual impact on the deficit below whatever overall number they agree on. Still, they may need to make some of the tax cuts expire after 10 years, leaving decisions to a future Congress they may not control.

With this latest turn in budget talks, Republicans are gradually shifting away from an earlier stance some took in favor of a tax plan that fully paid for itself in the first decade.

Budget Committee member Mike Crapo (R., Idaho) said on Monday that the tax cut should be "as big as we can get."

The budget is an essential first step to the major tax bill Republicans want to pass this year. If the House and Senate agree on a budget, they can fast-track a tax bill through the Senate on a simple-majority vote through a process known as reconciliation, rather than seek a bigger 60-vote majority that would require support from Democrats.

The budget sets the maximum size of any tax cut over the next 10 years, making it a crucial fiscal marker in this fall's tax debate. A budget with a tax plan that is revenue-neutral would effectively pay for itself, meaning any reduction in tax rates would be offset by reducing breaks or other revenue-raising measures. A budget with \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts wouldn't be revenue-neutral.

Republicans face internal tension in trying to bridge the gap between those warning about large federal debt levels and the desire of many to cut taxes. The Senate Budget Committee, led by Mike Enzi (R., Wyo.) hasn't yet scheduled a committee vote or released a draft budget.

Any plan would face hurdles in the Senate and the House. On the Senate floor, the budget would need support from at least 50 senators and Republicans have just 52 seats. The House budget came out of committee in July but hasn't gotten a vote in the full chamber amid

disputes over spending levels and the details of the tax plan. The House budget calls for a tax bill that doesn't cut tax revenue, but that assumes economic growth already. It also isn't clear how big a tax cut the Trump administration will support.

Sen. Pat Toomey (R., Pa.), a Budget Committee member, said in an interview Monday that he has been advocating a \$2 trillion tax cut. Mr. Toomey's preference is partly based on arguments that the tax bill, which is still being written, would generate significant economic growth that would yield additional tax revenue on its own and make the actual hit to the budget from tax cuts smaller.

The GOP tax-cut target may include more than \$400 billion in extensions of expired or expiring tax breaks. Under congressional scorekeeping conventions, retaining those breaks or replacing them would count as tax cuts.

The tax-cut number will dictate how much Republicans can reduce tax rates on individuals and corporations. It will also affect their ability to move forward on desired breaks, such as accelerated depreciation for some business investment.

Mr. Toomey said he hoped Budget Committee members would reach a decision this week. The number, he added, would likely end up below \$2 trillion; he said a \$1.5 trillion target would be possible.

"It's tough to squeeze in the optimal tax reform into that window, but it would be possible to certainly make a lot of progress relative to where we are now," he said.

The tax-rate cuts Republicans want for corporations, other businesses, estates and individuals would likely increase budget deficits by far more than \$2 trillion, so in their tax bill they would still need to find savings elsewhere in the tax code, likely by getting rid of some tax breaks.

"We're going to do as much base-broadening as we possibly can," Mr. Toomey said. "That will allow us to lower marginal rates and move somewhat in the direction" of faster capital writeoffs.

Faster growth likely couldn't cover all of a \$1.5 trillion tax cut, which would reduce projected federal revenue by more than 3%. The high end of the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation's estimate of revenues from economic growth in a 2014 tax plan was \$700 billion.

"For every economist, there's an equal and opposite economist, and they're usually wrong," said Budget Committee member John Kennedy (R., La.), who says a middle-class tax cut such as a bigger standard deduction is his top priority.

Under the fast-track budget reconciliation rules, bills can increase deficits for the duration of the budget, typically 10 years. After that, they can't increase deficits, without 60 votes in the Senate.

That could lead to a repeat of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts under

President George W. Bush, which were scheduled to expire in 2010, then were largely extended through 2012. Most survived and had expiration dates removed by a bipartisan majority in 2013.

Republicans such as Mr. Toomey and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) have argued that the tax cuts should be as permanent and long-run as possible to encourage businesses to invest.

The New York Times Trump Administration Rejects Study Showing Positive Impact of Refugees (UNE)

Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Somini Sengupta

8-10 minutes

A Syrian family in Fresno, Calif. The draft report by Health and Human Services officials, which was completed in July but not released, found that refugees "contributed an estimated \$269.1 billion in revenues to all levels of government" between 2005 and 2014 through the payment of federal, state and local taxes. Jason Henry for The New York Times

WASHINGTON — Trump administration officials, under pressure from the White House to provide a rationale for reducing the number of refugees allowed into the United States next year, rejected a study by the Department of Health and Human Services that found that refugees brought in \$63 billion more in government revenues over the past decade than they cost.

The draft report, which was obtained by The New York Times, contradicts a central argument made by advocates of deep cuts in refugee totals as President Trump faces an Oct. 1 deadline to decide on an allowable number. The issue has sparked intense debate within his administration as opponents of the program, led by Mr. Trump's chief policy adviser, Stephen Miller, assert that continuing to welcome refugees is too costly and raises concerns about terrorism.

Advocates of the program inside and outside the administration say refugees are a major benefit to the United States, paying more in taxes than they consume in public benefits, and filling jobs in service industries that others will not. But research documenting their fiscal upside — prepared for a report mandated by Mr. Trump in a March presidential memorandum implementing his travel ban — never made its way to the White House. Some of those proponents believe the report was suppressed.

"If anything needs to get a sunset, it should be a provision that does not complicate planning and budgeting and investment decisions," said Mr. Toomey, pointing specifically to new tax rules for U.S. companies' foreign profits.

Republicans have a one-vote margin on the Budget Committee, meaning they have to bridge the differences between tax cutters such as Mr. Toomey and lawmakers

The internal study, which was completed in late July but never publicly released, found that refugees "contributed an estimated \$269.1 billion in revenues to all levels of government" between 2005 and 2014 through the payment of federal, state and local taxes. "Overall, this report estimated that the net fiscal impact of refugees was positive over the 10-year period, at \$63 billion."

But White House officials said those conclusions were illegitimate and politically motivated, and were disproved by the final report issued by the agency, which asserts that the per-capita cost of a refugee is higher than that of an American.

"This leak was delivered by someone with an ideological agenda, not someone looking at hard data," said Raj Shah, a White House spokesman. "The actual report pursuant to the presidential memorandum shows that refugees with few skills coming from war-torn countries take more government benefits from the Department of Health and Human Services than the average population, and are not a net benefit to the U.S. economy."

John Graham, the acting assistant secretary for planning and evaluation at the health department, said: "We do not comment on allegedly leaked documents" and that no report had been finalized. He noted that Mr. Trump's memorandum "seeks an analysis related to the cost of refugee programs. Therefore, the only analysis in the scope of H.H.S.'s response to the memo would be on refugee-related expenditures from data within H.H.S. programs."

The three-page report the agency ultimately submitted, dated Sept. 5, does just that, using government data to compare the costs of refugees to Americans and making no mention of revenues contributed by refugees.

"In an average year over the 10-year period, per-capita refugee costs for major H.H.S. programs

who talk more about budget deficits, such as Sen. Bob Corker (R., Tenn.). Mr. Corker has met in recent days with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and President Donald Trump.

"I am all for pro-growth tax reform that is done properly, and I had a very productive meeting...with Secretary Mnuchin," Mr. Corker said in a statement last week. "We are doing some additional research and

will continue to engage on this topic."

Write to Richard Rubin at richard.rubin@wsj.com and Siobhan Hughes at siobhan.hughes@wsj.com

Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition as 'GOP Budget Targets \$1.5 Trillion Tax Cut.'

totalled \$3,300," it says. "Per-person costs for the U.S. population were lower, at \$2,500, reflecting a greater participation of refugees in H.H.S. programs, especially during their first four years" in the United States.

It was not clear who in the administration decided to keep the information out of the final report. An internal email, dated Sept. 5 and sent among officials from government agencies involved in refugee issues, said that "senior leadership is questioning the assumptions used to produce the report." A separate email said that Mr. Miller had requested a meeting to discuss the report. The Times was shown the emails on condition that the sender not be identified. Mr. Miller personally intervened in the discussions on the refugee cap to ensure that only the costs — not any fiscal benefit — of the program were considered, according to two people familiar with the talks.

He has also played a crucial role in the internal discussions over refugee admissions, which are capped by an annual presidential determination that is usually coordinated by the National Security Council and led in large part by the State Department.

This year, officials at the State Department as well as the Department of Defense have argued vociferously that the United States should admit no fewer than the 50,000-refugee cap that Mr. Trump imposed in January as part of the travel ban, but Mr. Miller has advocated for a much lower number — half or less, according to people familiar with the internal talks who described them on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to detail them. The Department of Homeland Security last week proposed a cap of 40,000. The limits being debated would be the lowest in more than three decades.

"We see an administration that's running a program that it's intent on destroying," said Mark Hetfield, the president of HIAS, one of nine

refugee resettlement agencies opposing the cut in admissions. "We do have champions in the White House and in the administration, but they're not being given a voice in this."

The issue is coming to a head as Mr. Trump attends the United Nations General Assembly this week for the first time as president. The United Nations has repeatedly appealed to nations to resettle 1.2 million refugees fleeing war and persecution from all over the world, and former President Barack Obama used the gathering last year to tout his goal of admitting 110,000 refugees in the fiscal year that ends this month, and to pressure other countries to follow the lead of the United States in embracing more displaced people.

Mr. Trump, by contrast, has highlighted his goal of radically cutting refugee admissions. The president moved swiftly after taking office to crack down on refugees, issuing his original ban against travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries only a week after taking office.

Facing legal challenges to that order, his administration released a second travel ban two months later against six countries, along with a presidential memorandum in which Mr. Trump called on the secretary of state to consult with the secretaries of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security and his White House budget director and submit within 180 days "a report detailing the estimated long-term costs of the United States Refugee Admissions Program at the federal, state, and local levels, along with recommendations about how to curtail those costs."

The budget Mr. Trump released in May argued that refugees and other immigrants were a fiscal drain. "Under the refugee program, the federal government brings tens of thousands of entrants into the United States, on top of existing legal immigration flows, who are instantly eligible for time-limited

cash benefits and numerous noncash federal benefits, including food assistance through SNAP, medical care and education, as well as a host of state and local benefits," the document said.

It would be less costly, it argued, if there were fewer refugees, since "each refugee admitted into the United States

comes at the expense of helping a potentially greater number out of country." Inside the administration, those who espouse this view argue that any research purporting to illustrate fiscal benefits of refugees is flawed and reflects only wishful thinking.

As Mr. Trump deliberates privately about the issue, a coalition of

human rights and religious groups as well as former national security officials in both parties has formed to encourage him not to allow the refugee cap to plummet.

"From a national security standpoint, while we can't take an unlimited number of refugees, we need to show our friends and allies that we stand with them and this is

a shared burden," said Michael Chertoff, the secretary of homeland security under George W. Bush.

"They've generated a lot of economic value," Mr. Chertoff added in an interview. "I don't think refugees are coming to take American jobs."

The New York Times

State Department Tightens Rules for Visas to U.S.

Gardiner Harris
4-5 minutes

they have deliberately lied.

That would make it difficult, if not impossible, for them to renew a visa, get a new one or change their status. And if they were still in the United States, it would make those visitors eligible for deportation.

Changes of plans that occur after three months may still be problematic but are not presumed to be the result of "willful misrepresentation," the cable said. Under previous rules, a change in plans was deemed to be misrepresentation only for the first month after arrival in the United States.

"If someone comes to the U.S. as a tourist, falls in love and gets married within 90 days and then applies for a green card, this means the application would be denied," said Diane Rish, the associate director of government relations at the American Immigration Lawyers Association. "This is a significant policy change."

In 2016, the United States issued more than 10 million visas, helping to support a large tourism industry.

But the new rule does not generally apply to citizens of 38 countries — including most of Europe and longstanding allies like Australia, New Zealand and Japan — who do not need a visa or an explicit travel, business or educational plan before coming to the United States.

Most people from the Middle East, Africa and much of Asia do need a visa, however, and consular decisions about who gets the precious documents are among the greatest sources of tensions between the United States and these nations. In some foreign countries, hundreds line up daily outside American embassies and consulates to apply.

Travelers from six predominantly Muslim countries who have been banned from entry to the United States under an order that the Supreme Court partially allowed to go into effect in June would not be affected since they cannot receive a visa under almost any circumstances.

The new rules are part of a broad push by the Trump administration to crack down not only on illegal

immigration but also to tighten restrictions on legal immigration. Earlier this month, President Trump moved to end an Obama-era program shielding from deportation about 800,000 young adults brought to the United States illegally as children, calling on Congress to find a way to continue it.

Ira Mehlman, a spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which generally advocates stricter immigration rules, said his group supported the new rule.

"It's an effort to prevent people from abusing the legal immigration process," Mr. Mehlman said. "The burden of proof should be on the people who say their plans have changed."

But Ms. Rish said that a lot could change in three months for a young visitor, and that presuming that such changes arose from a deliberate lie is draconian.

The international arrivals area at Terminal E at Boston Logan International Airport. In some countries, hundreds line up daily outside American embassies and consulates to apply for visas. M. Scott Brauer for The New York Times

WASHINGTON — The State Department is giving immigration and consular officials new grounds to deny entry to visitors to the United States or to kick them out if they are already here.

In a cable to American embassies around the world, Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson wrote that visitors who require a visa before entering the United States must then follow through on their stated plans for at least three months. If in that period they do something they failed to mention in an interview with a consular official — such as marry an American citizen, go to school or get a job — it will be presumed that

The Washington Post

Editorial : Trump's immigration crackdown hits a speed bump

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

4-5 minutes

country illegally has triggered a backlash in some Democratic-leaning states and localities. Perhaps the most sweeping example just emerged from the state legislature in California, which extended so-called sanctuary protections to people who lack legal authorization to live in the United States. Gov. Jerry Brown (D) agreed to sign the legislation, known as the California Values Act, after insisting on changes that injected a much-needed dollop of restraint to the original bill, which disregarded public safety in its determination to shield illegal immigrants.

The bill's supporters boast that it has made California, where at least a fifth of the nation's roughly 11 million undocumented immigrants live, the first bona fide "sanctuary state." Local police and sheriffs may no longer ask about people's immigration status in many cases, nor hold most detainees

behind bars at the request of federal immigration agents.

Similar if less sweeping laws in scores of cities and counties nationwide have infuriated the Trump administration, prompting the Justice Department's counterproductive threat to withhold federal law enforcement funds from so-called sanctuary localities. In a challenge to that threat brought by Chicago, a federal judge ruled last week that the funds could not be withheld without Congress's say-so.

The California bill, like the court ruling, limits the administration's enforcement discretion. It does so in keeping with common sense.

In its modified form, the bill, passed by lawmakers on a straight party-line vote, allows — but does not require — localities to cooperate in detaining and handing over undocumented immigrants convicted of one or more on a list of some 800 violent and serious

crimes. They include sex offenses, arson, domestic violence and even some lesser crimes chargeable either as misdemeanors or felonies.

It's critical that even the state's most liberal precincts — we're talking to you, San Francisco — receive that message. It's one thing to stand on the principle that illegal immigrants, most of whom have been in the country for 15 years or more, are a productive and vital part of America's social fabric. It's another to turn a blind eye to undocumented residents who have committed major crimes, imperil public safety and should be removed. As Mr. Brown put it on NBC's "Meet the Press," those who have committed serious crimes "have no business being in the country."

The final bill allows more cooperation between federal and local law enforcement agencies than many advocates for illegal immigrants would like. Immigration agents will be allowed to interview

The Post's View

Opinion

Opinion A column or article in the Opinions section (in print, this is known as the Editorial Pages). California Gov. Jerry Brown (D). (Rich Pedroncelli/AP)

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 18 at 7:35 PM

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S campaign against immigrants who are in the

people in jails, though they'll be barred from setting up offices in them, and they'll have access to some California enforcement databases under rules set by the state attorney general.

The attempt at striking a legislative balance prompted the state police chiefs' association, but not the sheriffs' association, to drop its initial opposition to the bill. The generally more lenient stance by

police reflects the challenge they face in cultivating strong relations with immigrant communities, without which neither victims nor witnesses will cooperate with them. Such on-the-ground facts have carried the

day in California. The administration should take note.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Senate Passes Defense Bill to Boost Military Spending

Kristina Peterson
4-6 minutes

Sept. 18, 2017 7:14 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—The Senate on Monday passed the annual defense policy bill, in a broad show of support for boosting military spending well above the current limits set by law.

The measure passed overwhelmingly Monday evening, in an 89-8 vote.

"For too long our nation has asked our men and women in uniform to do too much with far too little," Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R., Ariz.) said on the Senate floor Monday.

Mr. McCain urged lawmakers to support higher military spending not only in the defense policy bill, but later this year in negotiations over the spending bills that will actually translate it into more money for the military in fiscal year 2018.

"We still have no path to actually appropriate the money that we are about to authorize," Mr. McCain said. "That requires a bipartisan agreement to adjust the spending caps."

Senate negotiators now have to hammer out a compromise with the House, which passed its own version of the defense policy bill in July. Both chambers approved legislation authorizing military spending well above the level established by spending caps known as the sequester, which was born out of a 2011 deal aimed at winnowing the federal budget deficit.

The Senate bill would authorize \$640 billion in base military spending, plus \$60 billion in an emergency war fund not subject to the sequester. Under current law, base military spending is capped at \$549 billion for fiscal year 2018.

"The challenges we face have been compounded by everything from sequestration to the last administration's self-defeating foreign policy," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) said Monday. "We have to provide our service members with the resources and training they need."

Earlier this month, Congress passed an extension of the government's current funding through Dec. 8. Lawmakers from both parties are trying to work out a new budget agreement in the hopes of passing a longer-term spending bill in December.

Republicans are adamant about boosting military spending, but some conservatives have said they would balk at lifting nonmilitary spending. Democrats, meanwhile, have generally said they would insist on boosting domestic spending if military spending is increased. Although in the minority, Democrats will have leverage in December, since spending bills require 60 votes to clear procedural hurdles in the Senate, where Republicans hold 52 seats.

"We've been clear on the Democratic side that we think the artificial sequester caps are hurting not only our military readiness, but also our economy," said Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D., Md.) "That's why we've always said we need to do this together. A strong economy is very important to a strong national defense."

In upcoming discussions over the defense legislation, House and Senate negotiators will have to iron out some differences between the two bills.

The Senate defense policy bill would authorize a total of around \$700 billion, about \$4 billion more than the House measure, including emergency war spending that isn't subject to spending caps.

The Senate bill puts more money than the House in base military spending and less money in the Overseas Contingency Operations, or OCO, the special fund for ongoing wars. But both would set military spending higher than President Donald Trump, whose budget proposes \$603 billion in military spending plus an additional \$65 billion in defense emergency war spending.

The Senate measure would authorize a 2.1% pay raise for members of the Armed Forces, while the House bill would raise troops' pay by 2.4%.

The House bill also takes a new approach to the military's role in space, establishing a U.S. Space Corps as a separate military service within the Air Force. The Senate bill doesn't set up a Space Corps, instead creating a new position at the Pentagon, the chief information warfare officer, who would be responsible for making decisions related to space, among other issues.

Write to Kristina Peterson at kristina.peterson@wsj.com

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Editorial : Pelosi Faces Her Constituents

The Editorial Board

2 minutes

Sept. 18, 2017 7:07 p.m. ET

Now Nancy Pelosi knows how Charles Murray, or any conservative speaker at Berkeley, feels. The House Minority Leader was confronted by angry protesters in San Francisco

Monday as she and two other California Democrats sought to explain her tentative agreement last week with President Trump to provide legal protection to young undocumented immigrants.

The event was intended as a call for Congress to pass the Dream Act that would protect some 700,000 so-called Dreamers from being deported. And you'd think that Mrs. Pelosi would be thanked for getting Mr. Trump to move off his campaign

rhetoric and support legalization—especially when Democrats are in the minority on Capitol Hill.

But dozens of young people instead rushed the stage and began chanting, "we are not a bargaining chip" and "all or us or none of us." They also demanded a "clean bill" without any provisions for additional border security, as Mr. Trump said he wants.

Perhaps before they're granted legal status, these kids should be required to understand how America works. If they want legal status under the U.S. Constitution, Congress must pass a law and Republicans now have a majority. This requires compromise, and Mrs. Pelosi is trying to cut a deal that will stop these protesters from being deported. They're fortunate that a requirement of legal status isn't an IQ test.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Editorial : The Fed's Long March to Normal

The Editorial Board

5-6 minutes

Sept. 18, 2017 7:17 p.m. ET

The Federal Reserve this week, at long last, may announce plans to

begin unwinding its nearly nine-year experiment with unconventional monetary policy known as quantitative easing. The move is welcome, even if it brings more financial volatility, because for the sake of the economy and its own credibility the Fed needs to return to a more modest view of central banking.

Financial markets seem to be anticipating the decision without angst, and for that the Fed deserves some credit. Chair Janet Yellen and her colleagues have signaled the move well in advance, including what is an agonizingly slow wind down in its \$4.5 trillion balance sheet. The Fed has said it expects to pare that by only \$10 billion a

month for three months, then \$20 billion for another three, before rising to \$50 billion a month within a year. This means the return to monetary normalcy won't arrive before 2021 or 2022 at the earliest, assuming no recession along the way.

This reflects the Fed's inherent caution and perhaps a belief in its own QE advertising. Keep in mind how former Chair Ben Bernanke sold the concept: By buying long-duration Treasuries and mortgage securities, the Fed would drive down bond yields and force investors into riskier assets as they searched for yield.

This was supposed to lift asset prices and spur faster economic growth. The faster growth never arrived—despite Fed predictions for years that 3% annual GDP growth was right around the corner—in what has been the slowest modern expansion on record. But prices have risen in stocks, real estate, emerging-market plays and other assets.

If the Fed calls that a success on Mr. Bernanke's terms, then shouldn't the reverse happen as the Fed unwinds? That is, as the Fed unloads long-duration bonds, will investors sell some of those riskier assets to buy the Treasuries and mortgage debt the Fed won't be buying? Will we see naked bodies if the tide recedes in some asset classes?

The New York Times

Obamacare Repeal, Thought Dead in July, May Be Revived in Senate (UNE)

Robert Pear and Thomas Kaplan
10-13 minutes

Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina, speaking to reporters about health care last week on Capitol Hill. Tom Brenner/The New York Times

WASHINGTON — Congressional efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act sprang back to life on Monday as Senate Republicans pushed for a showdown vote on new legislation that would do away with many of the health law's requirements and bundle its funding into giant block grants to the states.

The Republican leaders of the latest repeal effort, Senators Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, said their effort — considered all but impossible earlier this month — was gaining momentum. The seven-year drive to repeal President Barack Obama's signature domestic achievement appeared to collapse in July when it fell one vote short in the Senate.

And the same three Republicans who opposed it then — John McCain of Arizona, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of

Alaska — have yet to commit to voting for the latest repeal bill. But the last-ditch repeal pitch received a jolt of energy on Monday when Gov. Doug Ducey of Arizona, a Republican, strongly endorsed it, putting pressure on Mr. McCain, who already faced the prospect of having to vote against his best friend in the Senate, Mr. Graham. Mr. Ducey had been a skeptic of earlier bills to repeal and replace the health law.

Under the Graham-Cassidy bill, millions could lose coverage, Medicaid would face cuts comparable to those in earlier repeal bills, and insurers in some states could charge higher premiums to people with pre-existing conditions. But only days remain before the expiration of special parliamentary language that protects repeal legislation from a filibuster in the Senate, and pressure is mounting for another vote.

"I think the odds have improved," said Senator John Thune of South Dakota, a member of the Republican leadership. "I just told Bill Cassidy he's kind of the grave robber. This thing was six feet under, and I think he's revived it."

It is still too early for Republican leaders to celebrate. Mr. McCain

business and governments that have been able to borrow at bargain rates. But that has meant less credit to the rest of the economy, especially small businesses that create most new jobs. Fed policy has also favored the affluent who have financial assets at the expense of savers and the middle class. Reversing all this could unleash more bank lending and perhaps more small-business hiring.

We are using "might" and "could" here because no one really knows. No central bank in a large, modern economy had previously embarked on such a vast bond-buying experiment, and thus none has ever tried to unwind it. Some modesty is warranted.

Yet that is all the more reason for the Fed to begin the long march back to normalcy. Whether or not you think its post-2008 exertions succeeded, they have taken the Fed far from its legal mandate.

Its purchase of mortgage securities in particular are a form of credit allocation that distorts financial markets and investment decisions.

the new bill would leave too much of the Affordable Care Act in place.

"This bill keeps 90 percent of the spending of Obamacare and reshuffles it," Mr. Paul said on Monday. "Really, when you look at how it reshuffles it, it does it just to take money from the Democrat states and give it to Republican states."

Ms. Murkowski said she was still considering her vote.

If the Senate does not vote by the end of next week, it will become nearly impossible to repeal the health law because the drive to kill the Affordable Care Act will lose the procedural protections that allow it to pass the Senate with a simple majority, rather than the 60 votes that would otherwise be needed.

Democrats sounded the alarm Monday, and the Senate Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer of New York, geared up for an all-out effort to block the Graham-Cassidy bill, which has support from President Trump.

"After a few weeks of lying dormant, Trumpcare is back, and its meaner than ever," Mr. Schumer said, adding: "This is so outrageous and so harmful that we're going to look at every possible way to slow the bill down."

Revue de presse américaine du 19 septembre 2017

Democrats said the Senate should not vote on the bill before receiving a full analysis from the Congressional Budget Office. The budget office said it was aiming to provide a preliminary fiscal analysis by early next week, but would not have estimates of the bill's effects on insurance coverage and premiums "for at least several weeks."

Mr. Schumer said it would be much better for Congress to advance a bipartisan bill being drafted by Senators Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee, and Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington. That bill would provide money to insurers to compensate them for reducing out-of-pocket costs for low-income people. Without those payments, insurers say, they will sharply increase premiums or withdraw from additional markets next year.

The House passed an Affordable Care Act repeal in early May, by a vote of 217-213. But the movement appeared to reach a dead end in July, when multiple versions of repeal legislation failed to gain even a simple majority in the Senate.

Refusing to accept defeat, Mr. Graham and Mr. Cassidy took another tack. The Graham-Cassidy bill has two major elements, one that is new and one that was found in many other Republican repeal bills this year.

The new element is a block grant. Mr. Graham and Mr. Cassidy would give each state a fixed amount of federal money for health care and health insurance

each year from 2020 to 2026. The allotments total \$1.2 trillion over the seven years. That is slightly less than what the federal government is expected to spend under the Affordable Care Act on the expansion of Medicaid, on premium tax credits and on the "cost-sharing reduction" payments to insurers on behalf of low-income consumers.

States would have sweeping new discretion over how to use the money, and they could receive federal block grant funds without putting up state money.

A sign set up before Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader from New York, held a news conference on Monday to criticize the Republican health care plan. Tom Brenner/The New York Times

In addition, the Graham-Cassidy bill would make deep cuts in Medicaid. It would end the expansion of eligibility under the Affordable Care Act, which has extended coverage to 13 million people. And it would put the entire program, which serves more than 70 million people, on a budget, ending the open-ended entitlement that now exists. States would receive a per-beneficiary allotment of federal money.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that 15 million fewer people would have Medicaid as a result of similar proposals in other Republican bills.

Mr. Graham and Mr. Cassidy would distribute federal block grant funds to the states using a complex formula that, like any such formula,

creates winners and losers. It is difficult for any state to be sure how much it would receive. The authors of the bill say they intend to reduce expected federal payments to high-cost states like Massachusetts and increase federal payments to states that have not expanded Medicaid.

"Right now, 37 percent of the revenue from the Affordable Care Act goes to Americans in four states" — California, New York, Massachusetts and Maryland, Mr. Cassidy said. "That is frankly not fair."

Mr. Graham and Mr. Cassidy said that their bill would also enhance the ability of states to waive "Obamacare regulations." Insurers would still have to offer insurance to anyone who applied, but states could obtain federal waivers allowing insurers to charge higher premiums to sick people or to omit some of the benefits they are now required to provide, like maternity care, mental health care or treatment for drug addiction.

Coverage, while theoretically available, could become unaffordable for some people with costly conditions like cancer or AIDS, health policy experts say. "Less-healthy people would face extremely high premiums" in states that obtained waivers involving both benefits and premiums, the Congressional Budget Office said in analyzing a similar provision of the bill passed by the House.

Mr. Cassidy played down that concern. Under the Graham-Cassidy bill, he noted, a state seeking a waiver would have to

describe how it intends to "maintain access to adequate and affordable health insurance coverage for individuals with pre-existing conditions."

But critics have taken notice. Sixteen groups representing patients and health care providers came out Monday in opposition to the bill. Among those who issued a joint statement opposing it were the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association, the March of Dimes and the lobbying arm of the American Cancer Society.

"Much of the proposal just repackages the problematic provisions of the Better Care Reconciliation Act," which the Senate rejected in July, the groups said.

The Graham-Cassidy bill would eliminate the requirement for most Americans to have health insurance and for larger employers to offer it to employees. Like prior Republican bills, it would also cut off federal funds for Planned Parenthood for a year — a provision opposed by Ms. Collins and Ms. Murkowski.

The outlook for the Senate bill in the House is unclear. Some Republicans from states that lose money under the block grant could balk. But House Republicans would be under immense pressure to support the bill and fulfill their longtime promise to dismantle the law, which was passed seven years ago.



New push to replace Obamacare reflects high stakes for Republicans

<https://www.facebook.com/kelsey.snell.3>

10-13 minutes

A final GOP effort to dismantle the Affordable Care Act burst into view this week in the Senate, where leaders began pressuring rank-and-file Republicans with the hope of voting on the package by the end of the month.

The renewed push comes nearly two months after the last attempt to overhaul the law known as Obamacare failed in a dramatic, early-morning vote, dealing a substantial defeat to President Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and prompting many to assume that the effort was dead.

The latest proposal would give states control over billions in federal health-care spending, repeal the

law's key mandates and enact deep cuts to Medicaid, the federally funded insurance program for the poor, elderly and disabled. It would slash health-care spending more deeply and would probably cover fewer people than the July bill — which failed because of concerns over those details.

The appearance of a new measure reflected just how damaging Republicans consider their inability to make good on a key campaign promise of the past seven years: to repeal and replace President Barack Obama's signature domestic policy achievement.

But trying again brings its own perils. It remains far from certain that McConnell can marshal the 50 votes he needs to pass the measure. Already under fire from Trump for falling short in the earlier effort, McConnell could see his standing with the president and other Republicans suffer all the more if he fails again. Sen. Bill

Cassidy (R-La.), left, and Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) are two of four sponsors of a fresh effort to replace the Affordable Care Act. (Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP)

Even Republicans who support the bill, including its chief sponsors, Sens. Bill Cassidy (La.), Lindsey O. Graham (S.C.), Dean Heller (Nev.) and Ron Johnson (Wis.), acknowledged the uncertainty of the moment. And McConnell has not committed to bringing the bill to the floor.

"I just told Bill Cassidy he's a grave robber," said Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), one of McConnell's top lieutenants. "This thing was six feet under, and I think he's revived it to the point where there's a lot of positive buzz and forward momentum. But it still comes down to, in the Senate, getting 50 votes."

[The new GOP health-care measure goes further than the failed one]

Still, the fresh flurry of activity marked the most serious attempt since the failed July vote to revive the long-standing Republican pledge to undo a law that has been vilified on the right. Among those joining the effort is Vice President Pence, who has been making calls to GOP senators and governors in support of the bill, according to a senior administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the vice president's private talks.

Part of the hurry results from the need to act before Sept. 30, when procedural rules expire that allow the Senate to pass legislation related to taxes and spending with a simple majority — and without any Democratic votes.

For McConnell, the path forward is politically perilous. His relationship with Trump has grown toxic since the July vote, prompting the president to approach leading Democrats to discuss a tax code

overhaul as well as a potential deal protecting undocumented immigrants brought to this country as children.

Another failure for McConnell could embolden Trump and Democrats to continue working with each other.

The Republicans' time-crunched effort to pass a health-care bill stalled in the Senate over the summer, but now some of the GOP hopes to push another plan forward. The Post's Paige Cunningham explains five key reasons the party is struggling to move their plan forward. The Post's Paige W. Cunningham explains the key reasons why the party struggles to move a health-care plan forward. (Video: Jenny Starrs/Photo: Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

The Republicans' time-crunched effort to pass a health-care bill stalled in the Senate over the summer, but now some of the GOP hopes to push another plan forward. The Post's Paige Cunningham explains five key reasons the party is struggling to move their plan forward. (Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

[A new strategy' for Trump? Democrats cautious but encouraged by fresh outreach.]

But if the embattled Senate leader can shepherd a health-care bill to passage, sending the effort to fulfill a core Republican promise over to the House, he could set himself on a path to restoring his footing in other talks. Such an outcome could also help Republican senators who are facing reelection campaigns in 2018 and coming under increasing attacks from insurgent conservative challengers over the failure to repeal Obamacare.

In addition to the political turmoil, the unexpected return to health-care legislation has put the nation's insurance industry in a state of uncertainty. After concluding that the effort was all but dead in July, some GOP senators reached out to Democrats to try to shore up the insurance marketplaces created under the ACA.

Now, industry officials must once again prepare for the possibility of a fresh and dramatic overhaul.

Cassidy has stopped short of predicting that his bill will pass,

telling reporters that his goal was to write legislation that sets a marker for conservative health-care policy.

"We're trying to set up good policy," Cassidy said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press." "Whether it's done now or later, the good policy will still be there."

With Democrats united firmly against the bill, Senate GOP leaders can afford to lose only two of 52 Republican votes, enabling them to pass the measure with a tiebreaking vote from Pence. They lost three in the July vote: Sens. John McCain (Ariz.), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Susan Collins (Maine).

None of those three committed to voting for the bill Monday, expressing reservations if not outright opposition.

"We need more information. I need to talk to the governor again," said McCain, whose home-state governor, Republican Doug Ducey, endorsed the bill Monday. Ducey had also endorsed the previous bill, so his current stance is not necessarily a clue as to what McCain will do.

McCain warned against rushing ahead. "We just need to have a regular process rather than, 'Hey I've got an idea, let's run this through the Senate and give them an up-or-down vote,'" he said.

Murkowski said she was trying to learn more about the proposal's impact on Alaska and consulting with her governor. On her way to McConnell's office Monday afternoon, she wouldn't say whether she was leaning for or against the bill.

Collins, who is seen by many Republicans as the strongest opponent of replacing the ACA, said Monday that she worries that millions could lose coverage under the new plan.

Adding to the challenge for Republican leaders: Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) said Monday that he is a firm no at this point.

"I think this is a game," Paul said. "I think this is a game of Republicans taking money from Democratic states. What happens if Democrats take power back?"

The proposal would slash health-care spending more deeply and would probably cover fewer people than the July bill, which failed precisely because of such concerns. Under the new bill, starting in 2021, the federal government would lump together all the money it spends on subsidies distributed through the ACA marketplaces and expanded Medicaid programs covering poor, childless adults who earn up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level.

This approach would generally result in less money for states that expanded Medicaid under the ACA and more money for states that didn't. That's because it would redistribute the money allotted to the 30 states that opted to expand Medicaid and spread it out among all 50 states.

Congress's nonpartisan budget analyst said Monday that it is working to provide a "preliminary assessment" of the bill by early next week but will not estimate how the measure would affect health insurance premiums or the number of people with coverage until later.

The notice from the Congressional Budget Office angered Democrats, who warned that any attempt to vote on the GOP legislation poses a serious threat to ongoing negotiations on a plan to stabilize the current health insurance markets and strengthen subsidies for out-of-pocket expenses.

Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) dismissed the GOP plan as a way to hide a massive cut to Medicaid and criticized Republican leaders for moving forward without a complete assessment of who would be covered and how much it would cost.

"It would be outrageous for our Republican colleagues to vote for this bill without knowing its effect on people," Schumer said. "That, whatever your ideology, would be nothing short of a disgrace."

Democrats have virtually no way to stop the legislation from being approved if at least 50 Republicans unite. But Schumer vowed to use every procedural tool available to create roadblocks.

He warned Monday that the renewed GOP repeal push could

upset talks between Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and the committee's top Democrat, Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), to offer a different approach that could pass the Senate with votes from both parties.

Even if the bill passed the Senate, it would face an uncertain outlook in the House.

"It's too early to tell whether all the Freedom Caucus guys will be supportive or not because we don't know what amendments will get added to the Senate bill," said Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), chairman of the House Freedom Caucus. The bill could also meet resistance from Republican lawmakers from states that expanded Medicaid, given the sweeping changes it proposes.

Republicans are on a tight deadline to vote — before Sept. 30 — if they hope to avoid being blocked by Senate Democrats. Senate budget rules allow some tax and spending measures to pass with 51 votes, instead of the 60 needed for most legislation, meaning the 52 Senate Republicans could pass a bill on their own. But those rules, which were written specifically to enable the health-care law, expire at the end of the fiscal year, and GOP leaders hope to write next year's rules to focus on hoped-for changes to the tax code.

The Finance 202 newsletter

Your daily guide to where Wall Street meets Washington.

McConnell did not mention the health-care push when he opened Senate business Monday afternoon.

Sen. John Cornyn (R-Tex.), McConnell's top deputy, said, "We're having a serious discussion, but it's still preliminary."

Asked how the process of securing votes was going, he replied: "That's one of the things I'm not talking about."

Paige Winfield Cunningham, David Weigel, Abby Phillip, Mike DeBonis and Elise Viebeck contributed to this report.

Read more at PowerPost



Editorial : The Republican Health Care Zombie Is Back

The Editorial Board

Republican lawmakers have wasted much of the year trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act, a move that would deprive millions of people of health insurance. They're back at it. Like a bad sequel to a terrible movie, a proposal whose main

architects are Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina would in many ways be worse than bills that came before. It would punish states like California and New York that have done the most to increase access to

health care and set in motion cuts to Medicaid, the federal-state program that provides insurance to nearly 70 million people, many of whom are disabled and elderly.

4-5 minutes

Chris Gash

This is not an idle threat. President Trump wants this bill passed by the end of next week, before the expiration of a budget rule that allows the chamber to pass a health care bill with only 50 votes (and a tiebreaker from the vice president). It's unclear whether the votes are there, but the bill's chances increased on Monday when Gov. Doug Ducey of Arizona said he supported it. His endorsement is important because it could convince Senator John McCain, who cast the decisive vote against repealing the A.C.A. in July, to vote for this version.

It is hard to overstate the cruelty of the Graham-Cassidy bill. It would eliminate the mandate that even healthy people buy health insurance, end the subsidies that help people purchase coverage and stop the expansion of

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL**

Blumstein

4-5 minutes

Sept. 18, 2017 6:49 p.m. ET

The GOP's push to repeal the Affordable Care Act is running out of steam—and time. Unless Republicans can agree by Sept. 30, they won't be able to pass a bill without 60 Senate votes. So here's a wild idea: Instead of repealing ObamaCare, make it unconstitutional.

Recall how the Supreme Court split when it upheld ObamaCare in 2012. Four justices thought the law's individual mandate—the requirement that Americans buy health insurance or pay a penalty—was unconstitutional. Another four thought it was hunky dory. What broke the tie was a novel opinion by Chief Justice John Roberts, who upheld the penalty by declaring it a tax.

**The
Washington
Post**

gtonpostopinions

3-4 minutes

Carter Hill, 4, his forehead scarred by a bullet. (Ricky Carioti/The Washington Post)

By Editorial Board

The Post's View

Opinion

Medicaid. It would offer states block grants they could use to help people get insurance but would leave people at the mercy of individual state legislatures and, over all, would provide \$239 billion less than what the federal government would spend under current law between 2020 and 2026, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Worse, the formula for determining state grants would penalize the 31 states that expanded Medicaid under the A.C.A. so as to provide more money to the 19 states that did not. This is a cynical attempt to win votes by taking money from generous states that are more likely to be governed by Democrats and giving some of it to representatives of stingier states that are more likely to elect Republicans. The block grants would disappear entirely in 2027, and it is by no means certain,

Blumstein : How to End ObamaCare in Two Pages

James F.

With good lawyering, the GOP can take advantage of that premise. Republicans could pass a two-page bill clarifying that Congress did not intend to use its taxing power to enforce the individual mandate and disavows the same going forward. Congress could state that it intends ObamaCare to contain no severability provision—meaning that, as the four dissenting justices agreed in 2012, the entire law must fall if the mandate is unconstitutional.

The Senate considered a “skinny” repeal bill in July, and this would be even skinnier—call it the “twiggy” repeal. But given that it clearly relates to taxes, it ought to be able to pass with 51 votes under budget reconciliation.

What would happen next? The Justice Department could declare the Affordable Care Act unenforceable in its entirety, relying on the new legislation and the 2012 decision. This would be within the executive branch's power to enforce the law in a proper, constitutional manner. Congress could provide a

given the pitched partisan battles over health care in recent years, that Congress would be inclined to reauthorize them.

Graham-Cassidy would further cripple Medicaid by putting a per-person cap on what the federal government spends on the program. Under current law, federal spending increases automatically to keep up with the rise in medical costs; a per-capita cap would leave governors, who are ultimately in charge of administering Medicaid, in the unenviable position of denying care to poor and older Americans.

The rush job proposed by Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Graham and endorsed by the president is deeply unfair and leaves other lawmakers with little time to understand what's in the bill or its true costs. The Congressional Budget Office says it will not be able to determine the full

phase-out period by revoking the taxing authority for ObamaCare effective, say, in two years.

This would reset the baseline of the health-care debate. Once the spinach of repeal is swallowed, the conversation would turn to adding back benefits, albeit structured in a better way. Lawmakers in both parties would be motivated to implement real reforms.

The ObamaCare model simply doesn't work. The law substitutes an unpopular and unworkable system of coercion for market incentives. Because insurers are required to cover pre-existing conditions, people can wait to take out policies until they become sick. That's like letting people buy fire insurance after their homes are ablaze. The individual mandate was supposed to prevent such gaming, but the weakness of the penalties and the mandate's unpopularity have undermined that strategy.

A better approach is to assign people with pre-existing conditions to a high-risk pool that government

impact of the legislation, including its effect on premiums and the number of people who have insurance, for several weeks.

The Senate should show a little patience; a better, more humane option awaits it. Senators Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee, and Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington, are working on a bill that would strengthen the A.C.A. by appropriating money for health subsidies that help low-income families; Mr. Trump has threatened to end those payments administratively. Mr. Alexander and Ms. Murray expect to produce their legislation this week.

subsidizes directly, perhaps by committing to these pools a fixed portion of Medicaid or any other funds allocated to the states. Society would be making a judgment to help these people, and then it would do so transparently.

Passing “twiggy” repeal may not be easy. There is tension in the GOP ranks between hard-liners who want straight ObamaCare repeal and moderates who fear upsetting the apple cart. But the ground may have shifted since the Senate's failed July vote-a-thon. Or a phased-in “twiggy” repeal could be added to the Graham-Cassidy bill that seems to be gaining some momentum. There's no way to know until Republicans try—and as Sept. 30 nears, this might become the only option remaining.

Mr. Blumstein is the director of Vanderbilt University's Health Policy Center.

Appeared in the September 19, 2017, print edition.

Editorial : Twenty-three children are shot every day in America

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

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

September 18 at 7:37 PM

CARTER HILL, age 4, was strapped in his car seat and being driven down the highway when he was shot in the head in a road rage incident on Aug. 6. What is just as horrifying is that Carter was one of at least 10 children who was shot in the United States that day. Daily gun violence that maims and kills

children is par for the course in this country, and that is the most terrible thing of all.

The struggle to save Carter's life and the cost of his near-fatal injuries were detailed by The Post's John Woodrow Cox in the latest installment of a searing series that examines the impact of violence on children. Shot just before midnight in a car driven by his mother, the boy was among the last victims of a stretch of gun violence that day that included a 2-year-old who fatally

shot himself in Missouri after he got hold of a gun, a 16-year-old girl killed in Virginia by a bullet meant for someone else and a 14-year-old boy shot to death as he stood on his porch in Chicago.

Analysis by The Post of the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission showed that on average, 23 children were shot each day in the United States in 2015. Of the approximately 8,400

shootings, 1,458 were fatal, a death toll that exceeds the entire number of U.S. military fatalities in Afghanistan this decade. The Post's analysis is in keeping with previous studies, including a report published in June in Pediatrics, that have established gun-related deaths as the third-leading cause of death overall among Americans ages 1 to 17.

Today's Headlines newsletter

**The
Washington
Post**

Next wave of EPA science advisers could include those who question climate change

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

9-11 minutes

The headquarters of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Photo by Matt McClain/ The Washington Post)

People who have questioned aspects of mainstream climate research appear on a list of 132 possible candidates for positions on EPA's influential Science Advisory Board, which the agency has opened for public comment until September 28. The board currently has 47 members, but 15 have terms ending in September and could be replaced by some of the candidates.

One candidate believes more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will "confer great benefits upon future inhabitants of the globe" by driving plant growth. Another has said of the climate change debate that "scare tactics and junk science are used to secure lucrative government contracts." Five candidates have challenged the Environmental Protection Agency's own science on the warming of the planet in court.

The board nomination process is an open one — anyone can nominate anyone else for consideration — and an EPA official involved in the process said that there had been "no whittling down" of the names submitted, other than making sure those nominated were indeed interested. The list includes scientists with diverse subject matter expertise and a long lists of credentials.

Energy and Environment newsletter

The science and policy of environmental issues.

But the inclusion of a handful of climate contrarians has caused early concern among environmental groups and some employees at the agency.

The day's most important stories.

The impact of gun violence on children — including the trauma to children who survive or witness it — represents a crisis, a serious public-health problem that demands attention. That, as one emergency-room doctor observed, "people just don't want to talk about it" is due in large measure to a national gun lobby that has used its clout to shut down debate and close off

"We should be able to trust that those who serve the EPA are the all-stars in their fields and committed to public service," said Michael Halpern, deputy director of the Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists. He said the upcoming round of appointments will test whether EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is "remotely interested" in independent scientific advice. "He already has a parade of lobbyists and advisers providing him with the perspectives from oil, gas, and chemical companies. The Science Advisory Board is a check on political influence and can help the agency determine whether the special interests are telling it straight."

The EPA official, who requested anonymity because the selection process is ongoing, said that after the public comment period ends, staff members likely will scale down the list of nominees to a smaller group of qualified candidates, with an emphasis on balancing out the board and trying to make sure there are experts across a range of disciplines, from hydrology to microbiology to statistics. But the final decision of who winds up advising the EPA resides with one person.

"Administrator Pruitt ultimately makes that decision," the official said.

[EPA now requires political aide's sign-off for agency awards, grant applications]

E&E News last week identified about a dozen board candidates that it said had previously expressed skepticism of widely accepted findings of climate science.

Even though none may ultimately end up on the board, the current list is raising eyebrows in light of Pruitt's own statements questioning the human role in climate change and the agency's removal of an informational website that publicly

consideration of basic and sensible protections that enjoy widespread support. Instead of enacting legislation to require safe storage of firearms — a move that would save countless lives lost to teen suicides and accidental shootings by toddlers — members of Congress who are compliant to the National Rifle Association push unrestricted sales of silencers because of the supposed health crisis to the hearing of hunters.

presented established climate science.

"There are definitely some inappropriate names on there," said one EPA scientist, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal. "I don't know how concerned to be. But I'm hoping that the scientific community comments actively on the list."

Several of the candidates are affiliated with the Heartland Institute, an Illinois-based conservative think tank with a long history of questioning various aspects of climate change science. E&E News reported that it had suggested a number of the names.

"We applaud any effort by Administrator Pruitt to bring qualified non-alarmist scientists onto the EPA's advisory boards," Heartland spokesman Jim Lakely told the publication.

One Heartland-affiliated scientist who is now a candidate for the EPA board is meteorologist Joseph D'Aleo, a co-founder of the Weather Channel and currently chief forecaster with WeatherBELL Analytics LLC. D'Aleo was one of 13 scientists who submitted an amicus brief in litigation over the EPA's Clean Power Plan, challenging the agency's science, including its key finding that atmospheric carbon dioxide, by driving climate change, endangers human health and welfare.

"EPA has no proof whatsoever that CO2 has a statistically significant impact on global temperatures," the scientists, including D'Aleo, wrote. "In fact, many scientists feel no such proof exists."

D'Aleo reiterated his skepticism that humans are driving a steady warming of the globe through greenhouse gas emissions, instead saying he thinks urbanization is creating pockets of heat where people live. "I really believe that virtually all of the warming is due to population building out cities and

The surgeon who successfully operated on Carter has treated at least 30 children struck by gunfire in his career. His first night as a neurosurgery intern in 2011 saw the case of a 17-year-old who had been shot "clean through" the back of the head. "There's nothing we can do," the doctor recalls telling the boy's mother. Congress doesn't have that excuse.

even building out small towns," D'Aleo said.

D'Aleo also has opposed the agency's 2009 "endangerment finding," a scientific document that provided the basis for the Obama administration's efforts to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. "If I was asked to participate, I would want to find out how much I can do and what they plan to do with the endangerment finding before I made my decision," he said.

Four other scientists who co-authored a legal brief challenging EPA's conclusion regarding human-caused climate change also appear on the list of advisory board candidates.

One of them, astrophysicist Gordon Fulks, wrote in The Oregonian in 2010 that he is "concerned that many who promote the idea of catastrophic global warming reduce science to a political and economic game." Fulks also is a policy adviser with the Heartland Institute.

Asked his take on the causes of global temperature change, Fulks responded by email that the Earth has seen "modest warming as we have come out of the Little Ice Age since about 1830 in ice core temperature reconstructions. That surely says that the warming over the last almost two centuries is natural in origin."

He also said that the Science Advisory Board has suffered from conflicts of interest and that "my hope is to make sure that the decisions that the EPA makes regarding regulations are firmly based in science and not superstition."

Another scientist, Craig Idso, is chairman of the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change, where he has written that "the modern rise in the air's CO2 content is providing a tremendous economic benefit to global crop production."

Yet another scientist, Richard Keen, is a meteorologist and author who traveled with the Heartland Institute to Rome in 2015 for a “prebuttal” to Pope Francis’s encyclical on climate change. There, he argued that “in the past 18 years and how many months, four months, there has been no global warming.” Another candidate, Anthony Lupo, is an atmospheric sciences professor at the University of Missouri. In 2014, he told a local Missouri media outlet, KOMU 8, that “I think it is rash to put the climate change completely on the blame of humans.”

Under Pruitt, the agency has already removed a Web page devoted to climate change science

that presented the scientific consensus view that it is largely caused by humans, and Pruitt has endorsed the idea of a “Red Team”/“Blue Team” exercise, in which a group of outside critics would interrogate the validity of mainstream scientific conclusions. The agency also has begun taking steps to roll back Obama-era climate regulations, while President Trump has proposed deep cuts to climate research.

The EPA has already seen a controversy involving a separate advisory board, the Board of Scientific Counselors, where a number of researchers expecting to have their terms renewed were

informed by the new administration that they would not be retained.

The EPA said in a public notice that for the Science Advisory Board, it is seeking expertise in a wide range of areas, extending far beyond fields generally relevant to what is happening with the climate, such as “chemical safety; green chemistry; homeland security; uncertainty analysis; and waste management.” But it is also looking for expertise in “atmospheric sciences,” where much climate knowledge lies.

“The Science Advisory Board of the EPA hardly ever takes on the issue of [is] climate change real,” said William Schlesinger, a current board member and the president emeritus

of the Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies. “They take on things like, what should be new emissions standards for the oil and gas industry, or just recently, what would be standards for performance for the airline industry.”

For his part, D’Aleo says that on climate change, the Science Advisory Board needs more diversity of opinion.

“You don’t go anywhere,” he said, “if you just put together a committee of like minded people that just share the same opinion.”