



# The New York Times

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## Bangladesh takes aim at dual citizens

Tahmima Anam  
Contributing Writer

### OPINION

**LONDON** For most of my life, I had one, troublesome passport. It was green, for one thing, even though the leather cover was titled “People’s Republic of Bangladesh.” My green passport made me nervous at airports; every time I handed it over to an immigration officer, I braced myself for the frown, the close inspection, the questions about how long I was staying and how much money I had with me.

I was always that person who held up the line while people behind me shuffled impatiently. I carried a file of documents with me whenever I traveled — my student ID, bank statements, even college transcripts. It was impossible to go anywhere on a moment’s notice: Once, to get a visa for a family trip to Barcelona, I camped out overnight in front of the Spanish Embassy in Dhaka, where I watched the sun rise with South Africans, Jordanians, Pakistanis and Indonesians — all bearers of problem passports like mine.

**The émigrés who left to work and sent back money have carried this country on their backs. Now a law would deprive them of nationality.**

But the passport was precious because it was hard-won. My grandparents were born in colonial India, my parents in East Pakistan. Bangladesh didn’t gain its independence until 1971, and the memory of this struggle was raw throughout my childhood. I was frequently reminded of how close we had come to being second-class citizens of Pakistan and how fortunate I was to have been born in a country that guaranteed my rights at birth.

It now appears that those rights are not inalienable. In February, Bangladesh’s cabinet approved a draft of the Citizenship Act, 2016, a law that proposes to create two tiers of citizenship. At the heart of the new law is a distinction that many countries make between resident citizens and dual citizens.

Bangladesh has, in the past, placed no restrictions on dual citizens. The new law changes that. People with dual citizenship won’t be able to join political organizations, work in the Civil Service or stand for office. Worse, their children will be subject to a bizarre and bureaucratic set of rules that, if not adhered to, will deny them citizenship altogether.

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EDWARD LINSMIER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

With an Uber driver in the St. Petersburg-Tampa area of Florida, above. Uber sends messages to entice drivers to stay on the road or to nudge them in a certain direction.



BRITTANY SOWACKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Ed Frantzen, a veteran Uber driver in the Chicago area, said of the company and its messages to drivers, “It was all day long, every day — texts, emails, pop-ups.”**



EDWARD LINSMIER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Scott Weber, a driver for both Uber and Lyft in the Tampa area, said he drove full time most weeks last year but struggled to turn a profit.**



EDWARD LINSMIER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Josh Streeter, a former Uber driver in the Tampa area, said he often received messages from the company encouraging him to stay on the road to earn more money.**

## How Uber pushes drivers’ buttons

Psychological tricks, like gaming tactics, used to maximize work force

BY NOAM SCHEIBER

The secretive ride-hailing giant Uber rarely discusses internal matters in public. But in March, facing crises on multiple fronts, top officials convened a call for reporters to insist that Uber was changing its culture and would no long-

er tolerate “brilliant jerks.”

Notably, the company also announced that it would fix its troubled relationship with drivers, who have complained for years about falling pay and arbitrary treatment.

“We’ve underinvested in the driver experience,” a senior official said. “We are now re-examining everything we do in order to rebuild that love.”

And yet even as Uber talks up its determination to treat drivers more humanely, it is engaged in an extraordinary behind-the-scenes experiment in

behavioral science to manipulate them in the service of its corporate growth — an effort whose dimensions became evident in interviews with several dozen current and former Uber officials, drivers and social scientists, as well as a review of behavioral research.

Uber’s innovations reflect the changing ways companies are managing workers amid the rise of the freelance-based “gig economy.” Its drivers are officially independent business owners rather than traditional employees with set schedules. This allows Uber to min-

imize labor costs, but means it cannot compel drivers to show up at a specific place and time. And this lack of control can wreak havoc on a service whose goal is to seamlessly transport passengers whenever and wherever they want.

Uber helps solve this fundamental problem by using psychological inducements and other techniques unearthed by social science to influence when, where and how long drivers work. It’s a quest for a perfectly efficient system: a

UBER, PAGE 6

## Hushed exit reflects museum’s dysfunction

Culture has been insular and lacking transparency, Met staff members say

BY ROBIN POGREBIN

In 2010, the Metropolitan Museum of Art hired Erin Coburn away from the J. Paul Getty Museum, lauding her as its “first chief officer of digital media” — a role created and promoted by the Met director and chief executive, Thomas P. Campbell, as part of his efforts to move the museum into the 21st century.

Two years later, Ms. Coburn quietly left, along with a confidential settlement from the Met. Though no clear explanation was given at the time, recent interviews with former and current staff members reveal that Ms. Coburn had long complained that she was unable to do her job effectively because of a close personal relationship between Mr. Campbell and a female staff member in her department.

Mr. Campbell announced his resigna-



KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Thomas P. Campbell, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, will leave in June. Turmoil in the digital media department during his tenure eroded his authority.**


tion in February. And while the relationship was not the reason he left, staff members say that it contributed to a yearslong erosion of respect for his authority and judgment within the Met and that it reflects larger problems in how the institution is managed by top executives and the board of trustees.

Despite its vaunted collection, prodigious \$332 million budget and a board stocked with some of the country’s most powerful donors, the Met is largely run by a dozen or so executives and trustees, interviews show, with little transparency or accountability.


The recent discovery of a looming \$40 million deficit that forced the institution to cut staff, trim its exhibition schedule and postpone a heralded \$600 million expansion are signs that the system is showing cracks. Now, details about how dysfunction in the digital media department was allowed to continue are revealing additional consequences of the Met’s turning a blind eye to problems.

Ms. Coburn filed a formal complaint in 2012. Met executives investigated her

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PAGE TWO

A shrine to German soccer, and more

DORTMUND JOURNAL  
DORTMUND, GERMANY

Museum seeks to link nation's obsession with sport to broader history

BY ALISON SMALE

In Germany, museums are usually hallowed, hushed halls of high culture. The brash concrete-and-glass structure right outside the main railway station of this changing Ruhr Valley city breaks the mold.

Just 16 months old, the national museum to the national sport of football has charged into visitors' consciousness like one of Germany's soccer greats dodging and weaving to score a crucial goal.

To its millions of fans the world over, football, or soccer, is more than mere sport. It is — choose your favorite description — a religion, an obsession, a pastime that inspires higher purpose in a humdrum life, fuses the individual to the collective, and infuses that collective with national feeling.

In Germany, all of that is true, and then some.

Since soccer first made its way here from England, where the Football Association was established in 1863, it has reflected both the pride and the darkest pitfalls of German history. It is this chronicle that distinguishes the Dortmund museum from similar soccer shrines around the world.

Fussball, as soccer is known here, looms large in the national psyche. In a country of 81 million people, the national soccer association is just shy of seven million members. There are 25,075 local soccer clubs. Freekickerz, a soccer site, is the biggest YouTube site in Germany, with more than five million subscribers. Men, in particular, schedule important life events like weddings around (even more) important matches.

"You know the famous saying," said Uli Hesse, author of several books on German soccer. "There are three most popular sports in Germany: football, football and football."

Accordingly, the German Football Museum in Dortmund had more than 200,000 visitors in its first year, and the appeal is growing, according to the city's proud mayor, Ullrich Sierau, an ardent fan of a multimedia museum he hails as "almost a visualization of Germany."

"It shows you the connection between society and football," he said.

Any soccer fan — in fact, almost any German — will tell you that the moment the country first felt able to return with dignity to the international arena after the evil of Nazism came with what is known here as "the miracle of Bern," the 3-2 victory in Switzerland over favored Hungary to win the World Cup in 1954.

Museum visitors are thus greeted with life-size portraits of the 1954 West German team and biographies of the players, above all the captain, Fritz Walter, and the coach, Sepp Herberger. A 1950s radio set broadcasts the commentary to the game — the German goalie, Toni Turek, is hailed as "a soccer god" — and a vintage TV shows black-and-white footage of the match.

A sign reminds visitors that most Germans then could not afford a TV, and thus are seen in black-and-white photos clustered around radios or the windows of bars with televisions. Also on display is a quotation from a distinguished historian, Joachim Fest, placing the 1954



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GORDON WELTERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The top level of the German Football Museum in Dortmund is devoted entirely to the national team, which won the World Cup as West Germany in 1954, 1974 and 1990 and as the unified country in 2014.



In the first year alone, more than 200,000 people visited the concrete-and-glass soccer museum in Germany's old industrial heartland, and its appeal is growing.

victory squarely in the Wirtschaftswunder, or economic miracle, that was West Germany after Nazism.

"There are three founding fathers of the Federal Republic," Fest said, referring to the first two postwar chancellors and the soccer triumph. "Politically, it's Adenauer. Economically, it is Erhard. And mentally, it is Fritz Walter."

Thomas and Christiane Kurz, 63 and 53, are too young to remember the match itself. But on a recent Sunday they sat rapt, hearing Herbert Zimmermann, the ecstatic commentator, proclaim: "Aus, aus, aus, aus. Das Spiel ist aus. Deutschland ist Weltmeister!" ("Over, over, over, over. The game is over. Germany is world champion!")

As the minutely detailed exhibit then relates, West Germany went on to win the Cup again in 1974 and 1990, and Germany won the most recent championship, in Brazil in 2014.

This prowess results at least in part from the strong teams that developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries here in the Rhine-Ruhr area, Germany's old industrial heartland. Borussia Dortmund, for example, was the team of the city's steelworkers.

The foundries are quiet now, but the local soccer stadium is the biggest in Germany. A sea of distinctive yellow and black, the team colors, forms at every sellout match, especially when fans sing local soccer anthems, another feature imported from England, but arguably stronger now here.

Mr. Hesse, an editor at the soccer magazine *11Freunde* and author of "Tor! The Story of German Football," said the exhibit focused on the national team at the expense of tradition-laden clubs from the gritty Ruhr down to Bayern Munich.

But that dominance mirrors the way soccer is drowning out other sports. After the 1980s surge of tennis through Boris Becker and Steffi Graf, "football is really pushing everything else aside," Mr. Hesse said, with even fourth-division games broadcast live on television. The Dortmund museum has fun fea-

tures, like one that lets you become your own game commentator from actual broadcast booths. Visitors can vote on whether the notorious third goal for England — when it clinched its lone World Cup, against Germany in 1966 — was, or was not, over the line. (The vote on a recent visit, perhaps no surprise, ran 57 percent against England.)

**"You know the famous saying. There are three most popular sports in Germany: football, football and football."**

But the museum does not shy from Germany's past. The national team of 1941 is seen giving the Nazi salute before a game in Sweden. An infamous 1944 propaganda film runs, showing Jewish inmates at the Nazis' Theresienstadt camp near Prague playing soccer and ostensibly enjoying a relaxed life. (In reality, most were about to be shipped to Auschwitz.)

The German Football Association's ban on women's soccer from 1955 to 1970 is also related in detail — as are the considerable achievements of Germany's female soccer team since. That story, noted the museum director, Manuel Neukirchner, provides two of the biggest surprises for young visitors.

"We ask: What do you think the German 'football Frauen' got for winning their first European title in 1989?" Mr. Neukirchner wrote in an email. "The kids say money. The truth is — a coffee service."

"Next we say women's football was banned not in the Middle Ages but in the middle of the 20th century — where was that? The answers are: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia. And the truth is: West Germany."

"Those are the Aha! moments where the discussion goes far beyond football."

Young visitors who might not go to a history museum absorb the 20th century as it unfurled through soccer. The exhibit, for example, recalls the country's Cold War division and rivalry that reached a climax when West Germany hosted and won the World Cup in 1974. But not before it suffered an unexpected 1-0 defeat against East Germany in an early round.

(The East German goal scorer, Jürgen Sparwasser, was feted by the Communist regime until he defected to the West in 1988, a harbinger of the fall of the Berlin Wall a year later.)

Lutz Engelke, the museum's Berlin-based designer, said weaving in national history was a prime aim. "Soccer and society are actually very, very close," he said. "Football is not just sport, but cultural, social and political history."

Hushed departure reflects the insular culture at the Met

MUSEUM, FROM PAGE 1

claims but concluded they did not warrant action. The board's chairman, Daniel Brodsky, and several museum executives negotiated Ms. Coburn's departure and settlement while Mr. Campbell stayed on.

Yet, for many then at the Met, the results of Mr. Campbell's relationship with a member of Ms. Coburn's staff were plain. The employee had a direct line to Mr. Campbell and gained power beyond her rank, they say, sidelining certain colleagues as well as commanding resources and hiring outside staff for her projects, which added costs and created infrastructure complications.

Leaders of the Met board and staff knew of the relationship before Ms. Coburn was hired, and at times had urged Mr. Campbell to end it, according to several people inside the museum.

Mr. Campbell and the staff member "had an inappropriate relationship," said Matthew R. Morgan, the general manager of the Met's website from 2006 to 2012.

This article is based on interviews with more than two dozen people during the past month, including Met trustees, senior executives, curators and former and current members of the digital staff. All expressed admiration for the museum and its acclaimed exhibitions, but many indicated concern that Met leaders would not take a hard look at themselves and find ways to change.

"This is not just the singular responsibility of the C.E.O.," said Reynold Levy, the former president of Lincoln Center

and an expert on nonprofit organizations, speaking generally about the Met's culture and recent struggles. "The board needs to hold a mirror up to itself and assess its own performance."

As boards go, the Met's is high end and old school. The museum sits atop the hierarchy of major New York cultural institutions and a spot on its board is considered the pinnacle of prestige.

At 101 members, the board is also unusually large, which means decisions tend to be made in committees, the most important of which are the executive and finance committees.

"If you're not on the executive committee, you don't know anything," said a trustee, who insisted on anonymity because board members have been warned against speaking publicly. "You're expected to work and give, but not to question what goes on."

Another trustee said, "Few people have spoken up in a meeting for about 40 years."

This laissez-faire style appeared to work well enough, including throughout the 31-year tenure of Philippe de Montebello, who retired as director in 2008, just before the financial crisis. But the world has changed for the Met since then. Corporate and government donations to cultural institutions have declined; competition from contemporary art institutions like the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art has increased; and the demands to reach new audiences digitally have become urgent.

It was in this environment that the

board promoted Mr. Campbell, a former tapestry curator who — while erudite and elegant — had never managed an institution, let alone one with 2,200 employees.

Inside the Met, several top executives knew about Ms. Coburn's complaints, former employees say, including Emily K. Rafferty, then president; Sharon H. Cott, the senior vice president, secretary and general counsel; Debra A. McDowell, the vice president for human resources; and Carrie Rebora Barratt, the associate director for collections and administration, all of whom declined to comment.

But aside from Mr. Brodsky and Candace K. Beinecke, chairwoman of the board's legal committee, other trustees were not made aware of the complaint. The Met said that this was to protect the confidentiality of the parties involved.

Moreover, without the approval or knowledge of the entire board, the Met brought the full force of its resources to bear on the case, hiring an external management consultant as well as two law firms, which conducted a six-week investigation.

Tax records show that Ms. Coburn received \$183,000 in addition to her annual salary of \$166,000 in her final year at the museum, an unusually high payment given that she had been employed for just two years. The museum would not comment on whether the size of the payment was connected to her claim or why the terms of her departure had been kept confidential.

As for the staff, no one was told the



VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Visitors on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The recent discovery of a \$40 million deficit forced the institution to cut staff and trim its exhibition schedule.

real reasons for the departure of Ms. Coburn, an executive described by former colleagues as "visionary" and "principled."

The exact nature of Mr. Campbell's relationship with the staff member — whom The New York Times is not naming to protect her privacy — is not widely known, except that she became friendly with Mr. Campbell when he was chief tapestry curator and that their relationship grew closer after he became director in 2009, current and former employees say.

The staff member joined the Met in 2000 and was promoted to manager of

online publications in 2009. She was generally considered capable and helped develop the museum's acclaimed online timeline, as well as website programs that feature curators and artists discussing pieces in the museum.

Nevertheless, her relationship with the museum director made her "very hard" to manage, said Morgan S. Holzer, a former project manager at the Met.

Neither the staff member nor Mr. Campbell responded to requests for comment.

During the past seven years, newer trustees from the business world have, by many accounts, brought a more bot-

tom-line metabolism to the board — zeroing in on the Met's financial troubles; hiring a new president and chief operating officer, Daniel H. Weiss, a former president of Haverford College, in 2015; and enlisting Boston Consulting to do one of the "360 evaluations" commonly used by Fortune 500 companies to assess employees.

Mr. Campbell remains director until June. Mr. Weiss, who has taken over Mr. Campbell's role as chief executive on an interim basis, is considered a leading candidate for the next director, though the Met is planning a formal search. At a recent board meeting the Met agreed to examine the job descriptions of president and director.

Mr. Brodsky, in response to detailed questions from The Times, said in a prepared statement: "The board is deeply committed to ensuring a professional workplace, and one that is free of favoritism of any kind. While we believe, in this case, that the board responded appropriately by ordering an investigation by independent, external experts — which concluded Ms. Coburn's complaint was without merit — there is more we can do."

The current president, Mr. Weiss, said he was committed to establishing a very different management culture at the museum. "I know that this has been a difficult time at the Met," he said in an email last week. "I look forward to working with my administrative and board colleagues to support a climate of candor, transparency, accountability and mutual respect."



# World



Antônio Alfredo da Conceição, the father of 13-year-old Maria Eduarda da Conceição, grieved during her funeral with hands covering his face, surrounded by other relatives.

## Schoolgirl victim of Rio crossfire

RIO DE JANEIRO

Residents see city in chaos as deaths from police raids on drug gangs rise sharply

BY DOM PHILLIPS

In cellphone pictures and selfies with friends, Maria Eduarda da Conceição was a joker, a happy teenager, making faces in the schoolyard and throwing poses in her school uniform of white T-shirt and blue shorts.

But last week, when the 13-year-old who loved playing basketball and dreamed of turning professional was playing in the same schoolyard in the Fazenda Botafogo favela, shortly after the photos were taken, a gun battle between the police and drug gang members erupted. She ran inside the school, only to be felled by three shots that left her dead and bleeding on the floor.

Her sister Beatriz da Costa, 21, heard the gunfire. “I went into the school and stayed there with her, lying on the floor, crying,” Ms. da Costa said in a phone interview.

It was one more tragic death in this city, adding to a spike in the numbers of people killed during police operations in Rio since last year. And it seems to have increased a sense that violence — particularly killings involving the police — is spinning out of control just seven months after the city hosted the Olympics.

Cellphone video shot during the gun battle showed two police officers approaching two men lying on the ground outside the school, picking up a rifle and shooting them dead. Both officers have been arrested.

The killing generated a flood of shocked headlines and reactions in a city that has endured tragedies like this before. The city’s education secretary, César Benjamin, wrote on his Facebook page that there was “no doubt” the shots that killed Maria Eduarda had been fired by officers aiming at two armed men. Residents of nearby communities called for an end to military-style police operations.

“These operations don’t result in anything, just violence,” said Valdeinei Martins, 44, a resident of the neighboring Acari favela whose brother João was killed by a stray bullet in 2014. “There is no intelligence.”

Killings as a result of “opposition to police intervention” across Rio de Janeiro State rose from 49 in February 2016 to 84 this February — a 71 percent increase, according to government reports. The 41st police battalion responsible for policing Fazenda Botafogo and surrounding areas, far from Rio’s picturesque beaches, proved even more lethal. In January and February, 36 people were killed during actions by officers from that battalion, compared with six during the same period last year, according to the same reports.

In shootings involving the police, officers often escape punishment, as a 2016 report by the advocacy group Human Rights Watch revealed. Officers also suffer high homicide rates themselves.

The Rio police declined to answer questions about Maria Eduarda’s death. In an emailed statement, they said officers had been sent “to intervene in an action by criminals” and that “there was a confrontation.” Maria Eduarda’s death is being investigated, the statement said, and the two officers shown in the video are in custody and their case being investigated by internal affairs.

The deaths also come as Rio struggles

with financial and political crises. Brazil is undergoing its worst recession on record, with 13 million people unemployed and an economy that contracted 3.6 percent last year. The state government in Rio is broke, struggling to pay police salaries and reeling from the jailing of a former governor, Sérgio Cabral, accused of running a multimillion-dollar graft network that took bribes from Olympic and other public works projects.

Although policing is a state government responsibility, the governor, Luiz



Maria Eduarda in a photograph provided by her family. She was shot three times.

Fernando de Souza, formerly Mr. Cabral’s deputy, has yet to comment on the killings but plans to meet with Maria Eduarda’s family this week.

Antônio Costa, founder of River of Peace, an antiviolence group, said Mr. de Souza’s silence was symptomatic of a city many feel is descending into chaos. “The State of Rio has no leader,” he said. “There is no one in command; there is a complete loss of credibility.”

Maria Eduarda’s brother Uidson Ferreira, a 32-year-old martial arts instructor, said his sister’s death showed how the police were woefully unprepared to

deal with armed confrontation in densely populated areas. “With this crisis, with these 13 million unemployed, the violence has been very explicit,” he said in a phone interview. “What is happening is a lack of preparation of the whole hierarchy of the government. This comes from above, and the poor class always pays the bill.”

“The family has totally fallen apart psychologically,” he added, his voice shaking with tears. “It is like we are going crazy.”

Bruna Aguiar, 25, a university student and resident of Acari, said the police would have thought more carefully before opening fire near a school in a middle-class area. Outside Rio’s favelas, she said, people avoid subjects like police killings and poverty.

“If you talk about it, you touch on an open wound,” Ms. Aguiar said.

On Sunday afternoon, the favela hummed with life. Beeping motorbikes zipped down its winding lanes, where residents sat out on plastic chairs and armed young men from its dominant drug gang guarded strategic corners.

One with a radio pointed to the rooftop from which he said the police had shot a fellow gang member dead the previous week. Another wearing an earpiece cradled a machine gun and moved to music booming from a nearby bar.

Priscilla Cabral, 32, a shop assistant, showed the bullet holes left in her front door after one police operation; her daughter Angelina, 8, had tried to cover them up with chewing gum. Ms. Cabral had pulled her dozing son Robert, 15, off the sofa seconds before another bullet thudded into the wall behind him.

She said her studious daughter got upset when gun battles stopped her from going to school. “She said to me: ‘Take me out of here. I can’t stand it anymore,’” Ms. Cabral said.

## Trump has new fans in China: Maoists

BEIJING

Group wants to take page from ‘America first’ script to protect local workers

BY CHRIS BUCKLEY

They protest, picket and sing to defend Mao’s memory, yearning for the East to be red again. But lately some of China’s Maoists are finding inspiration in an unlikely insurgent in the West: Donald J. Trump.

Mr. Trump “has torn up the old rules of the ruling elites, not just of the capitalist West,” said Zhang Hongliang, a polemicist who is the loudest proponent of what could be loosely called “Maoists for Trump.” In a recent essay, Mr. Zhang lauded the American president as being alone among national leaders daring “to openly promote the political ideas of Chairman Mao.”

President Xi Jinping of China will be sizing up Mr. Trump during a visit to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida this week, in the leaders’ first summit meeting. Meanwhile, many ordinary Chinese people have also been taking the measure of the new American president and have been bewildered, incensed and yet, sometimes, inspired.

The global wave of nationalist, anti-establishment sentiment that Mr. Trump rode to power has washed ashore in China, encouraging a hard-left fringe, hostile to capitalism and Western influence, that the Communist Party has long sought to cultivate — and contain.

China’s Maoists are a small minority; most Chinese have no desire to revive the ruthless, convulsive politics of the Mao era. But the Maoists’ growing assertiveness, echoed in their embrace of aspects of Mr. Trump’s agenda, could help push the country in a more authoritarian direction.

They also complicate the efforts of Mr. Xi to play both sides of an ideological divide: as a robust defender of Mao’s legacy, but also a proponent of market liberalization and even a champion of globalization in the Trump age.

It is a paradox that these admirers of Mao Zedong, a Marxist revolutionary who railed against Western imperialism, have found things to like about this American president, a property tycoon with a cabinet crowded with millionaires. But they want Mr. Xi to take a page from Mr. Trump’s “America First” script and protect Chinese workers from layoffs, privatization and foreign competition.

“Trump opposes globalization, and so should China,” said one article on Utopia, a popular Maoist website. “Trump’s ideology has oriented toward China, and he is learning from China,” said another hard-left Chinese site.

China’s neo-Maoists, as they are sometimes called, are loosely united by demands for stringent economic equality, zealous nationalism and a loathing of the capitalist West and liberal democracy.

“Many of the same ideas now animating the global populist movement have been the hallmarks of the neo-Maoist movement for over a decade,” said Jude Blanchette, a researcher in Beijing who is writing a book about the movement.

Many on China’s far left see Mr. Trump as a dangerous foe who has questioned established American policy on Taiwan, vowed to confront China’s hold on the disputed South China Sea and threatened to cut Chinese exports to America.

But some Maoists say Mr. Trump also offers a model. They think he led a populist revolt that humbled a corrupt political establishment not unlike what they see in China. They cheer his incendiary tactics, sometimes likening them to Mao’s methods. And they hear in his remarks an echo of their own disgust with Western democracy, American interventionism and liberal political values.

Maoist meetings and websites dwell on a clutch of enemies, including the C.I.A. and America in general, genetically modified crops and advocates of privatizing state companies. But they reserve a particular venom for liberal Chinese intellectuals and celebrities who have condemned Mao.

In the West, Mr. Zhang argued, the nationalists are on the right while the left generally supports internationalism.

“But China is the opposite,” he said. “Chinese rightists are the traitors, while Chinese leftists are the patriots.”

The Communist Party never repudiated Mao’s legacy after his death in 1976, but it condemned his excesses, including the violent Cultural Revolution, and for years he was ignored or discredited while Deng Xiaoping pursued economic liberalization.

In the 1990s, though, the party refurbished Mao’s image and fostered a popular revival to bolster its authority and blunt calls for political liberalization. Officials started using Maoists to intimidate liberal academics, dissidents and other critics. Before Mr. Xi came to power in 2012, a political rival, Bo Xilai, openly encouraged “red” nostalgia for the Mao era as part of an effort to build a populist power base.

Mr. Bo was purged in a scandal, but the Maoists regrouped as Mr. Xi associated himself more closely with Mao’s legacy than his predecessors and called for a return to Marxist purity.

Under Mr. Xi, Maoists have become bolder in taking to the streets and organizing online campaigns. A court ruling last year and legislation adopted last month protecting Communist heroes buoyed them further.

Nobody expects Maoists to seize power in Beijing. They are disdained by the middle class and kept on a tether by the party authorities. Across China, there are maybe a few thousand active supporters of Maoist groups and causes, and their petitions against liberal intellectuals have gathered tens of thousands of signatures online, according to Mr. Blanchette, the researcher.

But the Chinese left’s broader message of muscular nationalism and its criticism of widening inequality have reverberated, especially among retirees, hard-up workers and former party officials dismayed by extravagant wealth and corruption. Mr. Trump and the global surge of nationalism and populism have added to the political tinder.

Dai Jianzhong, a sociologist in Beijing, said Maoists could gain a bigger following if an economic slowdown caused mass layoffs, or if tensions with the United States escalated into confrontation.

“It was a big shock for China to see American middle-class society over-

President Trump “has torn up the old rules of the ruling elites.”

whelmed by this tide of populism,” Mr. Dai said. “China is a different society, but if the economy stagnates and workers feel badly let down, populism will gain influence. The influence of Maoists and ultraleftists would spread.”

In January, about a hundred protesters gathered in Jinan, a provincial capital in eastern China, to condemn a professor of communications and advertising, Deng Xiangchao, who had dared to criticize Mao online. They chanted and held banners near Mr. Deng’s home, reviling him as a “traitor” and “enemy of the people,” and roughed up a few people who came to show their support for him.

“We love Chairman Mao because we’re poor, and the poor all love Chairman Mao,” Yang Jianguo, a retired worker who was among the protesters, said by telephone after the protest.

The university swiftly dismissed Mr. Deng rather than engage in a prolonged battle with the Maoists. Later, left-wing activists successfully demanded the dismissal of a television station worker who had voiced support for Mr. Deng.

Many Maoists see Mr. Xi as a fellow traveler who is taking China in the right direction by restoring respect for Mao and Marx. But others say privately that even Mr. Xi may not be a dependable ally. They point out that he has promoted himself abroad as a proponent of expanding global trade and a friend of multinational corporations, drawing an implicit contrast with Mr. Trump.

He Weifang, a law professor at Peking University who is often reviled by China’s far left, said Mr. Xi was playing a dangerous game by allowing Maoist populists to silence liberal voices and risked igniting political fires that he cannot easily control.

“If political currents in China increasingly converge with populism,” Mr. He added, “that would have a powerful effect on China’s future.”

Adam Wu contributed research.



A portrait of Mao Zedong in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. China’s neo-Maoists are united by demands for economic equality, zealous nationalism and a loathing of the West.



WORLD

Fear shuts newspaper in Mexico

Publication closes doors after journalists at other news outlets are killed

BY CHRISTOPHER MELE AND SANDRA E. GARCIA

With the headline “¡Adios!” in large type emblazoned across its front page, a newspaper in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, has announced that it is shutting down, after nearly 30 years, in the wake of the killings of three journalists from other news organizations last month.

The newspaper, Norte, said in a letter printed on its front page on Sunday that the killings and the increasing violence and threats against reporters meant that journalism had become a high-risk profession.

“Today, dear reader, I am addressing you to inform you that I have decided to shut down this daily because the guarantee of safety for us to continue journalism does not exist,” the newspaper executive Oscar A. Cantú Murguía, wrote, adding: “Everything in life has a beginning and an end, a price to pay. If this is what life is like, I am not ready for one more of my colleagues to pay for it and I am not either.”

The announcement came after Miroslava Breach Velducea, a correspondent for the national newspaper La Jornada, was shot eight times outside a garage on March 23; a columnist, Ricardo Monlui Cabrera, was shot to death as he left a restaurant with his wife and son on March 19; and Cecilio Pineda Birtó, a freelancer and the founder of La Voz de Tierra Caliente, was killed at a carwash in Ciudad Altamirano on March 2.

Norte, which has been publishing for 27 years in Ciudad Juárez, a border city across from El Paso, Tex., had a circulation of about 30,000 daily and 35,000 on Sundays.

Mr. Murguía wrote that he worked to promote a free press for decades and tried at Norte to “inform with veracity, objectivity, honesty and transparency.” The deaths of the journalists “have become evidence of things that keep us



THE LAST EDITION OF NORTE, IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ, MEXICO, WAS PUBLISHED ON SUNDAY.

from freely continuing to work on our jobs,” he wrote.

There may have been other factors in play, as well. The Mexican newspaper industry faces financial pressure, and Jesús Salas, a reporter at Norte, said in an interview on Monday that its top editors informed the staff several weeks ago that the print edition would close.

Mr. Murguía told the newsroom on Monday that there were several reasons for the shutdown, Mr. Salas said, including financial troubles, a strained relationship with local officials and the wave of violence against journalists. Mr. Murguía could not be reached for comment on Monday.

The Washington Post reported that Mr. Murguía was going to announce the shutdown of the newspaper’s digital edition as well.

A commenter on Norte’s Facebook page, Erick Hernandez, wrote that the announcement, “hurts in my soul.”

Carlos Lauría, a senior program co-ordinator with the Committee to Protect Journalists, said Mexico was going through a “deep freedom of expression crisis,” adding that the killings and threats are having a chilling effect on the democratic process, reducing the flow of information to citizens and lawmakers and stifling Mexicans’ ability to engage in public debate.

“There is a climate of pervasive violence and a terrible record of impunity, which is creating a climate where journalists are terrified to go to work,” he said.

The committee reported that since 1992, 38 journalists have been killed with the motives for the slayings confirmed as reprisals for their work. The group ranked Mexico as No. 11 of the 20 deadliest countries for journalists.

Organized crime is one source of the violence, but it sometimes colludes with public officials, so pinpointing responsibility is often difficult, Mr. Lauría said.

Mr. Lauría said the closing of Norte sent “a terrible signal,” but added: “They are left without any options. You cannot blame them.”

Liam Stack and Paulina Villegas contributed reporting.

CORRECTION

• An article on March 31, using information from a company developing the Kérastase Hair Coach Powered by Withings, misstated the hairbrush’s price. When it goes on sale this year, the brush will be sold for less than \$200, but it will not be \$179.

Pakistani to head Saudi-led alliance

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

Critics say coalition is leaving out Shiites in fight against extremism

BY SALMAN MASOOD AND BEN HUBBARD

The appointment of a popular Pakistani general to head a Saudi-led alliance of Muslim countries has set off a furor in Pakistan, amid fears that the move could exacerbate sectarian tensions at home.

Pakistan’s government last week approved the appointment of a former army chief, Raheel Sharif, to lead the Islamic Military Alliance, a posting announced by Saudi Arabia in January. The alliance includes several dozen mainly Muslim countries with the professed aim of countering terrorism, although it has taken no significant military actions, least of all fighting the Islamic State in Syria or Iraq.

Saudi officials have argued that the alliance’s Muslim identity will make it more effective in combating Islamic extremists, while sending a powerful message that Muslim countries reject their ideology.

But critics note that the alliance does not include predominately Shiite states like Iran and Iraq, making it more of a Sunni military alliance than an “Islamic” one.

Still, the appointment of Mr. Sharif would give the Saudi-led alliance a more international sheen. Saudi Arabia has also been seeking support from Pakistan for its campaign against Houthi rebels in Yemen and may be hoping Mr. Sharif’s appointment could bolster that effort.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, led by Imran Khan, has been at the forefront of opposing the decision, saying it could widen the Sunni-Shiite divide in Pakistan and upset Iran, its majority-Shiite neighbor to the west. The party says it will raise the issue in the next session of Parliament later in April.

“We strongly advocate the policy of impartiality as far as conflicts in the Middle East and Muslim world are concerned,” Mr. Khan said. “We under no circumstances should fall into any conflict and hence be watchful of the impacts of every decision or choice we make.”

And on the country’s rambunctious political talk shows, guests have been vigorously debating the appointment of Mr. Sharif, who was hugely popular for his successes against Taliban militants before retiring last year, with many expressing criticism and apprehension.

Pakistan is a predominantly Sunni country, like Saudi Arabia, but Shiites make up about 20 percent of the population and have often been targeted by extremist Sunni militants.

Saudi Arabia is a major donor to Pakistan and maintains close ties with its civil and military elite. It has appealed to Pakistan for military help with its cam-



THE AFTERMATH OF AN AIRSTRIKE IN SANA, YEMEN, IN 2015. SAUDI ARABIA HAS APPEALED TO PAKISTAN FOR HELP WITH ITS CAMPAIGN IN YEMEN, BUT PAKISTAN HAS STAYED AWAY.

paign in Yemen against the Houthi rebels, who are aligned with Iran and belong to the Zaydi Shiite sect.

But Pakistan has so far stayed out of the operation, which is being conducted by Saudi Arabia and a smaller coalition of Arab countries. Egypt, too, has turned down requests for help in Yemen despite receiving considerable financial aid from Saudi Arabia.

“We strongly advocate the policy of impartiality as far as conflicts in the Middle East and Muslim world are concerned.”

Pakistan’s Parliament passed a resolution in 2015 urging the government to stay neutral in Yemen, where more than 10,000 people have been killed, mainly in airstrikes, since Saudi Arabia began its campaign.

So far, the government has complied, but its inability to rally support behind the Saudi military effort has been embarrassing for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who lived in exile in the Saudi city of Jidda in the early 2000s. (Mr. Sharif, the prime minister, is not related

to the former army chief.)

Now, the former army chief’s presence at the head of the Islamic Military Alliance could signal a change in policy, analysts say.

Mr. Sharif’s appointment “is a bit of a departure from Pakistan’s more-or-less neutral position on the Iran-Saudi regional war,” said Arif Rafiq, a political analyst. “As a result, it’s been opposed by even the mainstream, nonsectarian political voices in Pakistan.”

Mr. Rafiq said the impact on sectarian relations in Pakistan was still uncertain.

If the alliance “confronts Iran or Iranian-supported groups in places like Yemen, then it could trigger protests inside Pakistan,” he said. “On the other hand, if it is merely a symbolic coalition that limits itself to Saudi territory or focuses on combating ISIS, then the negative impact would be minimal,” he added, referring to the Islamic State, which is also known as ISIL.

Mr. Rafiq said the retired general might see himself more broadly as the leader of a military force defending the Muslim holy sites of Mecca and Medina against the Islamic State, which might be more acceptable for most Pakistanis.

“For Pakistanis, to have one of their

own leading, it would be a great honor,” he said.

The establishment of the Islamic Military Alliance was announced in December 2015 by Saudi Arabia’s deputy crown prince and defense minister, Mohammed bin Salman. It had 34 state members at the start and has since acquired several others. The coalition fighting in Yemen is a smaller group of Arab countries.

Pakistan’s approval of Mr. Sharif’s appointment two months after its announcement suggested some hesitation by the government.

For Mr. Sharif, the controversy has taken some luster off the popular image he enjoyed after a successful campaign against Taliban militants that began in 2014, clearing militant strongholds in northwest Pakistan.

The general’s popularity overshadowed that of the civilian government, which has been troubled by corruption allegations. He was widely perceived as influencing foreign policy decisions and relations with neighbors, and indirectly pressuring government over political matters.

Last year, there were widespread calls for the general to take over the gov-

ernment instead of retiring when his term expired in November.

Since the news broke of his future job, he has maintained his characteristic silence, frustrating critics who wonder what his appointment means and the objectives of the military alliance.

“As a retired military chief seeking a high-profile job that will likely involve a great deal of shuttle diplomacy, why is General Raheel not seeking the government’s approval to address the media and respond to the misgivings in person?” an editorial in Dawn, the country’s leading English daily, asked on Tuesday. “Surely addressing the nation’s concerns ought to be the priority.”

The newspaper said the “clandestine manner” in which the government handled the general’s appointment had created the impression of a “secret deal.”

Nasser Janjua, the Pakistani national security adviser, said last week that Mr. Sharif would play a visible, proactive role in the military alliance.

Mr. Sharif will “use his experiences and knowledge to remove internal misunderstandings among Muslim countries,” Mr. Janjua was quoted as saying by local news media. He did not elaborate.

Trump shifts course on Egypt, praising its leader

WASHINGTON

Autocratic former general finally gets the seal of approval he long craved

BY PETER BAKER AND DECLAN WALSH

Ever since he seized power in a military takeover nearly four years ago, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt has been barred from the White House. But President Trump made clear on Monday that the period of ostracism was over as he hosted Mr. Sisi and pledged unstinting support for the autocratic ruler.

“We agree on so many things,” Mr. Trump said as he sat beside Mr. Sisi in the Oval Office. “I just want to let everybody know in case there is any doubt that we are very much behind President el-Sisi. He’s done a fantastic job in a very difficult situation. We are very much behind Egypt and the people of Egypt. The United States has, believe me, backing, and we have strong backing.”

In that one moment, Mr. Trump underscored a fundamental shift in American foreign policy since he took office. While his predecessors considered authoritarians like Mr. Sisi to be distasteful and at times shied away from them, Mr. Trump signaled that he sees international relations through a transactional lens. If Egypt can be a partner in the battle against international terrorism, then in Mr. Trump’s calculation, that is more important to the United States than concerns over its brutal suppression of domestic dissent.

Nothing could have made Mr. Sisi happier. He arrived from Cairo with a list of financial, security and political requests, but effectively he got what he really wanted in the six minutes that news media photographers were permitted in the Oval Office to record the visit that President Barack Obama had denied him. The picture of the general-turned-president in the White House, hosted by an American leader lavishing praise on

him, was the seal of approval he had long craved, the validation of a strongman on the world’s most prominent stage.

That big hug was just what Mr. Sisi’s government sought, said Eric Trager, a scholar on Egypt at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. “It wants to see the White House legitimate it, and set it on a new course.”

The scene provided a powerful counterpoint to Mr. Sisi’s many critics, in Egypt and abroad, who know him as the leader of the military takeover that removed an elected president, oversaw a vicious security operation in which hundreds of protesters were gunned down in the streets of Cairo and has cemented his authority by filling prisons with his opponents while strangling the free press.

It was the first visit by an Egyptian president to Washington since 2009, when the guest was the autocratic former president Hosni Mubarak, then in the waning years of his rule — an era now viewed by many Egyptians as a time of relative freedom, prosperity and security. Mr. Mubarak was pushed out in 2011 by a wave of street protests and succeeded, in a democratic election, by the Muslim Brotherhood’s Mohamed Morsi. Taking advantage of popular discontent with Mr. Morsi two years later, the military, led by Mr. Sisi, then a general, took power and Mr. Sisi became president in a pro forma election that awarded him 97 percent of the vote.

Little of that seems to matter to Mr. Trump, though, who has showcased his determination to reshape America’s relationship with a number of Middle Eastern countries, regardless of human rights concerns. In his public remarks on Monday, Mr. Trump made no mention of such issues; aides said he believed discussing them in private might be more effective.

“I just want to say to you, Mr. President, that you have a great friend and ally in the United States and in me,” Mr. Trump told Mr. Sisi.

Mr. Sisi responded in kind, sometimes in language mimicking a Trumpian sales pitch. “You will find Egypt and myself always beside you in bringing about

an effective strategy in the counterterrorism effort,” he said. He also vowed to support Mr. Trump’s effort to negotiate peace between Israelis and Palestinians, calling it an effort to “find a solution to the problem of the century in the deal of the century.”

While Egypt has long been a crucial American ally in the Middle East, Mr. Trump’s admiration for Mr. Sisi seems to mirror in some ways his appreciation for President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia as a fellow tough figure. After their first meeting in September, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly when Mr. Trump was running for president, he hailed Mr. Sisi as “a fantastic guy” and spoke admiringly of his iron-fisted methods.

“He took control of Egypt. And he really took control of it,” Mr. Trump said in an interview with Fox Business Network.

Mr. Sisi has rejected suggestions that he rules like a dictator. Speaking to The Financial Times in December, he said he was “building love between Egyptians, a wave of respect for the other that will start in Cairo and spread across the region.”

Yet as he was preparing to meet Mr. Trump on Monday, a court in Cairo sentenced 17 people to jail terms of five years each for taking part in street protests in January 2015.

Beyond a shared love for harsh rhetoric warning against the dangers of jihadist Islam, Mr. Trump has striking similarities with Mr. Sisi’s brand of authoritarianism in Egypt, according to Middle East analysts.

Both leaders came to power promising splashy projects derided by experts — an expensive extension of the Suez Canal for Mr. Sisi, and a giant wall along the Mexico border for Mr. Trump. In speeches, both leaders have been ridiculed for making exaggerated claims, embracing conspiracy theories and speaking in a limited rhetorical style.

Yet in many other ways there are vast differences between their styles. While Mr. Trump wrestles with a hostile media and recalcitrant factions in his Republican party, Mr. Sisi’s government has im-



PRESIDENT TRUMP EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE EGYPTIAN LEADER, ABDEL FATTAH EL-SISI, AT THE WHITE HOUSE ON MONDAY. IT WAS THE FIRST VISIT BY AN EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SINCE 2009.

prisoned dozens of journalists — fewer only than China and Turkey, according to press freedom groups — while the national Parliament is stuffed with his supporters.

It remains far from clear what the two leaders can offer each other in concrete terms. Mr. Sisi has resisted loud appeals to release Aya Hijazi, an American aid worker imprisoned in Egypt, while Mr. Trump’s White House is considering slashing foreign aid, including Egypt’s \$1.3 billion in military assistance.

While human rights advocates criticized Mr. Trump, a lawyer for Ms. Hijazi said her supporters had been working with his administration to highlight her case and those of others being held.

“We are confident that the case is being prioritized at the highest levels of the United States government,” said the lawyer, Wade McMullen, managing attorney at Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, an advocacy center.

One thing Mr. Sisi desperately wants, according to Western officials in Cairo, is for Mr. Trump to reinstate a military financing deal, suspended under Mr. Obama in 2015, allowing Egypt to effectively buy, on credit, the tanks, war-

planes and other large-ticket military items it desires.

But experts say that while a military finance deal might please American defense contractors, it could frustrate American counterterrorism goals by making Egypt less likely to pour resources into smaller weapons that are better suited to battling Islamic State insurgents in Sinai.

“If Trump is really interested in getting the Egyptians to fight radical Islam, giving them more tanks will not help our goals,” said Amy Hawthorne of the Project on Middle East Democracy, a Washington nonprofit that has been sharply critical of Mr. Sisi.

Some experts worry that Mr. Sisi’s hard-knuckled approach to Islamism could ultimately feed a new wellspring of radicalism that could blow back on the United States.

“The authoritarian bargain the U.S. has struck with Egypt might seem to be the right thing, but it never pays off in the long run,” Ms. Hawthorne said. “It’s not just about being on the wrong side of history, but about over-investing in a regime that is fueling radicalization that will ultimately harm U.S. interests.”



# Ad suggests bomb progress in North Korea

**NUCLEAR, FROM PAGE 1**  
Pyongyang's efforts is doomed to failure. Mr. Trump's budget is expected to include more money for antimissile defenses, and officials say he is continuing a cyber- and electronic-warfare effort to sabotage North Korea's missile launches.

The president's insistence that he will solve the North Korea problem makes it hard to imagine a shift toward acceptance of its arsenal. But in private, even some of his closest aides have begun to question whether the goal of "complete, verifiable, irreversible disarmament" — the policy of the Obama and Bush administrations — is feasible anymore.

"We need to change the fundamental objective of our policy, because North Korea will never willingly give up its program," Michael J. Morell, a former deputy director of the C.I.A., and James A. Winnefeld Jr., a retired admiral and a former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote last week on the website The Cipher Brief.

"Washington's belief that this was possible was a key mistake in our initial policy thinking," added the two men, experienced hands at countering the North. The United States and China, they argue, should abandon the idea of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula and turn to old-fashioned deterrence.

Similarly, Robert Einhorn, a former senior State Department nonproliferation expert, writes in a new report for the Brookings Institution that a "dual-track strategy involving both pressure and negotiations" would be more likely to "bring China on board." The technique is reminiscent of what was used to push Iran into nuclear negotiations.

But Mr. Einhorn cautioned that "while the complete denuclearization of North Korea would be the ultimate goal of negotiations, there is virtually no prospect that it could be achieved in the near term."

The Chinese appear unlikely to make more than token efforts to squeeze North Korea, fearing the repercussions if the regime were to collapse, and Mr. Kim has made it clear that he is not about to negotiate away what he sees as his main protection against being overthrown by the United States and its allies.

"China will either decide to help us with North Korea, or they won't," Mr. Trump said in the Financial Times interview. If the Chinese fail to act, he added,



While experts doubt the declaration by Kim Jong-un, North Korea's leader, that the country had tested a hydrogen bomb, intelligence estimates say that he is working on it.

"it won't be good for anyone."

It is unclear how close North Korea is to constructing a hydrogen bomb. But Siegfried S. Hecker, a Stanford University professor who once directed the Los Alamos weapons laboratory in New Mexico, and has visited the North's main nuclear complex, said the ad for lithium 6, while surprising, was a reminder that North Korea, though a backward country, was still capable of major technical advances.

"I can't imagine they're not working

on true thermonuclear weapons," Dr. Hecker said in an interview.

As Mr. Trump and Mr. Xi meet on Thursday and Friday, Mr. Kim, on the other side of the world, may have a plan of his own for the summit meeting: Satellite photographs suggest he is preparing for a sixth nuclear test. Workers have dug a deep tunnel, which can block radioactive leaks if carefully sealed, leaving intelligence experts struggling to estimate the North's progress.

American intelligence officials, and

their South Korean and Japanese counterparts, are debating whether the next blasts will mark major steps down the road to a true thermonuclear weapon.

The lithium 6 ad is evidence that Mr. Kim is following a road map that the United States drew up back in 1954. That was when it tested its first thermonuclear weapon fueled by the isotope. The blast, code-named Bravo, was the most powerful the United States ever detonated. In minutes, its mushroom cloud rose to a height of 25 miles.

could confine explosions of up to 282 kilotons — roughly 20 times as strong as the Hiroshima blast. Although a hydrogen bomb can be that powerful, so can large atom bombs.

When Mr. Kim declared last year that the North had set off a hydrogen bomb, there was no evidence to back up the claim. More likely, experts said, Mr. Kim's scientists had created a "boosted" atomic bomb in which a tiny bit of thermonuclear fuel resulted in a slightly higher explosive yield but fell well short of a true hydrogen bomb.

"It's possible that North Korea has already boosted," said Gregory S. Jones, a scientist at the RAND Corporation who analyzes nuclear issues. Like other experts, he pointed to the nation's two nu-

**President Trump's strategy to halt North Korea's nuclear program remains incomplete and largely unexplained.**

clear blasts last year as possible tests of small boosted arms.

A next logical step would be for the North to turn the material it was advertising online, lithium 6, into a more complex kind of thermonuclear fuel arrangement for a much more powerful bomb.

"It's a big step," Dr. Hecker, the Stanford professor, said of a true hydrogen bomb, adding that it was perhaps beyond the North's skill. But over all, he said, the North has shown technical savvy in carefully pacing its nuclear tests, suggesting that it would eventually learn the main secrets of nuclear arms.

"They've done five tests in 10 years," he said. "You can learn a lot in that time."

As for the excess lithium 6, any interested buyers may have a hard time answering the ad.

The street address given in the advertisement does not exist. The phone has been disconnected or no one answers. But if the operation really is being run out of the North Korean Embassy in Beijing, it should not be hard for Mr. Xi to find out: It is about two and a half miles down the road from the compound where he lives.

*David E. Sanger reported from Washington, and William J. Broad from New York.*

## India rethinking nuclear policy

Leaders are said to ponder a pre-emptive strike on Pakistan in event of war

BY MAX FISHER

India may be reinterpreting its nuclear weapons doctrine, circumstantial evidence suggests, with potentially significant ramifications for the already tenuous nuclear balance in South Asia.

New assessments suggest that India is considering allowing for pre-emptive nuclear strikes against Pakistan's arsenal in the event of a war. This would not formally change India's nuclear doctrine, which bars it from launching a first strike, but would loosen its interpretation to deem pre-emptive strikes as defensive.

It would also change India's likely targets, in the event of a war, to make a nuclear exchange more winnable and, therefore, more thinkable.

Analysts' assessments, based on recent statements by senior Indian officials, are necessarily speculative. States with nuclear weapons often leave ambiguity in their doctrines to prevent adversaries from exploiting gaps in their proscriptions and to preserve flexibility. But signs of a strategic adjustment in India are mounting.

This comes against a backdrop of long-simmering tensions between India and Pakistan — including over state-sponsored terrorism and the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir — which have already led to several wars, the most recent in 1999.

The new interpretation would be a significant shift in India's posture that could have far-reaching implications in the region, even if war never comes. Pakistan could feel compelled to expand its arsenal to better survive a pre-emptive strike, in turn setting off an Indian build-up.

This would be more than an arms race, said Vipin Narang, an associate professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who studies nuclear powers.

"It's very scary because all the 'first-strike instability' stuff is real," Mr. Narang said, referring to a dynamic in which two nuclear adversaries both perceive a strong incentive to use their warheads first in a war. This is thought to make nuclear conflict more likely.

Hints of a high-level Indian debate over the nuclear doctrine mounted with a recent memoir by Shivshankar Menon, India's national security adviser from 2011 to 2014.

"There is a potential gray area as to when India would use nuclear weapons first" against a nuclear-armed adversary, Mr. Menon wrote.

India, he added, "might find it useful to strike first" against an adversary that

appeared poised to launch or that "had declared it would certainly use its weapons" — most likely a veiled reference to Pakistan.

Mr. Narang addressed a nuclear policy conference hosted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace last week in Washington.

"There is increasing evidence that India will not allow Pakistan to go first," he told the gathering of international government officials and policy experts.

Mr. Menon's book, he said, "clearly carves out an exception for pre-emptive Indian first use in the very scenario that is most likely to occur in South Asia."

After Mr. Narang's presentation generated attention in the South Asian news media, Mr. Menon told an Indian columnist, "India's nuclear doctrine has far greater flexibility than it gets credit for."

Mr. Menon declined an interview request for this article. However, when



A test of India's Agni-5, nuclear-capable intercontinental missile in 2013.

told what the article would say, he did not challenge its assertions. India's Foreign Ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

Whether these signals indicate a real shift or a strategic feint, analysts believe they are intended to right a strategic imbalance that has been growing for almost a decade.

Should India sustain a nuclear attack, its doctrine calls for a major retaliation, most likely by targeting its adversary's cities. When this policy was announced in 2003, it fit the threat posed by Pakistan's arsenal of long-range, city-destroying weapons.

Since then, Pakistan has developed smaller warheads designed for battlefield use. These were meant to address Pakistan's India problem: The Indian military is much larger, virtually ensuring its victory in an all-out war.

Such weapons could be used against invading Indian troops, halting a war before it could be lost. This would exploit a gap in India's doctrine: It is hard to imagine that India would escalate to total nuclear war, as its doctrine commands, over a small battlefield strike on Pakistani soil.

This created a Pakistan problem for India: Its chief adversary had made

low-level nuclear war thinkable, even potentially winnable. Since then, there have been growing hints of debate over modifying the Indian doctrine.

Another reason analysts suspect change: India's doctrine initially served to persuade the United States to drop economic sanctions it had imposed over nuclear tests. Given President Trump's softer stance on proliferation, that impetus may no longer apply.

Mr. Menon, in his book, seemed to settle on an answer to India's quandary: "Pakistani tactical nuclear weapon use would effectively free India to undertake a comprehensive first strike against Pakistan," he wrote.

The word "comprehensive" refers to a nuclear attack against an adversary's arsenal, rather than its cities. It is meant to instigate and quickly win a nuclear exchange, leaving the other side disarmed.

Taken with a policy of pre-emption, these two shifts would seem to address India's Pakistani problem, in theory persuading Pakistani leaders that a limited nuclear war would be too dangerous to pursue.

For India, Mr. Narang said, "you can really see the seductive logic" to such an approach. This would be "really the only pathway you have if you're going to have a credible nuclear deterrence."

Shashank Joshi, a fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, said he suspected that Mr. Menon was signaling something subtler: a warning that India's strategy could adapt in wartime, potentially to include first strikes.

That distinction may be important to Indian officials, but it could be lost on Pakistani war planners who have to consider all scenarios.

Mr. Joshi, in a policy brief for the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank, tried to project what would happen if India embraced such a policy, or if Pakistan concluded that it had.

First would come the arms race. The fear of a first strike, Mr. Joshi wrote, "incentivizes Pakistan to undertake a massive nuclear buildup, in order to dispel any possibility of India disarming it entirely."

India, whatever its strategy, would feel compelled to keep pace.

Second comes the tightening of nuclear tripwires, Mr. Joshi warned, as "this reciprocal fear of first use could pull each side in the direction of placing nuclear forces on hair-trigger alert."

Finally, in any major armed crisis, the logic of a first strike would pull both sides toward nuclear escalation.

"Maybe it is this Reaganesque strategy," Mr. Narang said, comparing India's potential strategic shift to President Ronald Reagan's arms race with the Soviet Union. "But Pakistan has a much bigger security problem than the Soviet Union did. And that can blow back real quick."

N | Harmony Maker

Puglia, Italy

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KUBIKA WALL UNIT – DESIGN PIERANGELO SCIUTO  
BIS OTTOMAN – DESIGN NATUZZI

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WORLD

# Tricks used to push drivers’ buttons

*UBER, FROM PAGE 1*  
balance between rider demand and driver supply at the lowest cost to passengers and the company.

Employing hundreds of social scientists and data scientists, Uber has experimented with video game techniques, graphics and noncash rewards of little value that can prod drivers into working longer and harder — and sometimes at hours and locations that are less lucrative for them.

To keep drivers on the road, the company has exploited some people’s tendency to set earnings goals — alerting them that they are ever so close to hitting a precious target when they try to log off. It has even concocted an algorithm similar to a Netflix feature that automatically loads the next program, which many experts believe encourages binge-watching. In Uber’s case, this means sending drivers their next fare opportunity before their current ride is even over.

And most of this happens without giving off a whiff of coercion.

“We show drivers areas of high demand or incentivize them to drive more,” said Michael Amodeo, an Uber spokesman. “But any driver can stop work literally at the tap of a button — the decision whether or not to drive is 100 percent theirs.”

Uber’s recent emphasis on drivers is no accident. As problems have mounted at the company, from an allegation of sexual harassment in its offices to revelations that it created a tool to deliberately evade regulatory scrutiny, Uber has made softening its posture toward drivers a litmus test of its ability to be-

**“We show drivers areas of high demand or incentivize them to drive more. But any driver can stop work” at the tap of a button.**

come a better corporate citizen. The tension was particularly evident after its chief executive, Travis Kalanick, engaged in a heated argument with a driver that was captured in a viral video obtained by Bloomberg and that prompted an abject apology.

But an examination by The New York Times found that Uber is continuing apace in its struggle to wield the upper hand with drivers. And as so-called platform-mediated work like driving for Uber increasingly becomes the way people make a living, the company’s example illustrates that pulling psychological levers may eventually become the reigning approach to managing the American worker.

Though employers have long borrowed insights from social science to get more out of their workers — tech companies like Google have calculated that employees interact more with unfamiliar colleagues when they can graze together at snack bars — they are constrained in doing so. A large body of law and custom in the United States holds that because employers have far more power over their employees than businesses do over their customers, they must provide them with far greater protections — not least, a minimum wage and overtime pay.

Uber exists in a kind of legal and ethical purgatory, however. Because its



Julie Glassberg for The New York Times  
Travis Kalanick, the chief executive of Uber, recently apologized after getting in a heated argument with a driver. The exchange was captured in a video that went viral.

drivers are independent contractors, they lack most of the protections associated with employment. By mastering their workers’ mental circuitry, Uber and the like may be taking the economy back toward a pre-New Deal era when businesses had enormous power over workers and few checks on their ability to exploit it.

“We’re talking about this kind of manipulation that literally affects people’s income,” said Ryan Calo, a law professor at the University of Washington who studies the way companies use data and algorithms to exploit psychological weaknesses. Uber officials, he said, are “using what they know about drivers, their control over the interface and the terms of transaction to channel the behavior of the driver in the direction they want it to go.”

### AN EMPATHY QUESTION

Alongside Uber’s already daunting targets for expanding its pool of drivers to meet mounting demand, the high turnover threatened to cap the company’s growth and throw it into crisis.

Underlying the tension was the fact that Uber’s interests and those of drivers are at odds on some level. Drivers, who typically keep what’s left of their gross fare after Uber takes a roughly 25 percent commission, prefer some scarcity in their ranks to keep them busier and push up earnings. For its part, Uber is desperate to avoid shortages, seeking instead to serve every customer quickly, ideally in five minutes or less.

This is particularly true of shortages so pronounced as to create a “surge” — that is, a higher fare than normal. While surges do mitigate shortages, they do so in part by repelling passengers, something directly at odds with Uber’s long-term goal of dominating the industry. “For us, it’s better not to surge,” said Daniel Graf, Uber’s vice president of product. “If we don’t surge, we can produce more rides.”

As a result, much of Uber’s communication with drivers over the years has aimed at combating shortages by advising drivers to move to areas where they exist, or where they might arise. Uber encouraged its local managers to experiment with ways of achieving this.

“It was all day long, every day — texts, emails, pop-ups: ‘Hey, the morning rush has started. Get to this area, that’s where demand is biggest,’” said Ed Frantzen, a veteran Uber driver in the Chicago area. “It was always, constantly, trying to get you into a certain direction.”

The friction over meeting demand was compounded by complaints about arrangements like aggressive car leases that required many drivers to work upward of 50 or 60 hours each week to eke out a profit. Uber officials began to worry that a driver backlash was putting them at a strategic disadvantage in their competition with Lyft, which had cultivated a reputation for being more driver-friendly.

Uber was increasingly concerned that many new drivers were leaving the platform before completing the 25 rides that would earn them a signing bonus. To stem that tide, Uber officials in some cities began experimenting with simple encouragement: You’re almost halfway there, congratulations!



Brittany Sowacke for The New York Times  
Lathia Ealy, left, of Chicago, loading groceries into an Uber vehicle driven by Ed Frantzen. Ms. Ealy, who does not own a car, said Uber is “cheaper than a cab and faster than a bus.”

While the experiment seemed warm and innocuous, it had in fact been exquisitely calibrated. The company’s data scientists had previously discovered that once drivers reached the 25-ride threshold, their rate of attrition fell sharply.

And psychologists and video game designers have long known that encouragement toward a concrete goal can motivate people to complete a task.

“It’s getting you to internalize the company’s goals,” said Chelsea Howe, a prominent video game designer who has spoken out against coercive psychological techniques deployed in games. “Internalized motivation is the most powerful kind.”

Mr. Amodeo, the Uber spokesman, defended the practice. “We try to make the early experience as good as possible, but also as realistic as possible,” he said. “We want people to decide for themselves if driving is right for them.”

### ALMOST THERE

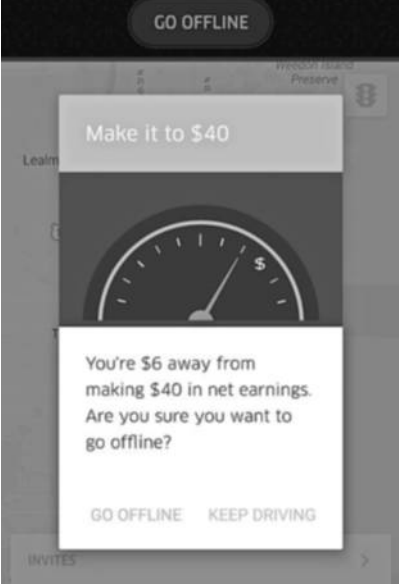
As he tried to log off at 7:13 a.m. on New Year’s Day last year, Josh Streeter, then an Uber driver in the Tampa, Fla., area, received a message on the company’s driver app with the headline “Make it to \$330.” The text then explained: “You’re \$10 away from making \$330 in net earnings. Are you sure you want to go offline?” Below were two prompts: “Go offline” and “Keep driving.” The latter was already highlighted.

“I’ve got screen shots with dozens of these messages,” said Mr. Streeter, who began driving full time for Lyft and then Uber in 2014 but quit last year to invest in real estate.

Mr. Streeter was not alone. For months, when drivers tried to log out, the app would frequently tell them they were only a certain amount away from making a seemingly arbitrary sum for the day, or from matching their earnings from that point one week earlier.

The messages were intended to exploit another relatively widespread behavioral tic — people’s preoccupation with goals — to nudge them into driving longer.

Over the past 20 years, behavioral economists have found evidence for a phenomenon known as income targeting, in which workers who can decide how long to work each day, like cabdrivers, do so with a goal in mind — say, \$100 — much the way marathon runners



Left, one of the messages Uber sent its drivers to encourage them to stay on the road. At right, a prompt that an Uber driver in the Chicago area received on his app.



try to get their time below four hours or three hours.

While there is debate among economists as to how widespread the practice is and how strictly cabdrivers follow such targets, top officials at Uber and Lyft have certainly concluded that many of their drivers set income goals. “Others are motivated by an income target for sure,” said Brian Hsu, the Lyft vice president in charge of supply. “You hear stories about people who want to buy that next thing.” He added, “We’ve started to allow drivers to set up those goals as well in the app.”

Some of the most addictive games ever made rely on a feeling of progress toward a goal that is always just beyond the player’s grasp. Managers have been borrowing from the logic of gaming for generations, as when they set up contests and competition among workers.

But Uber can go much further. Because it mediates its drivers’ entire work experience through an app, there are few limits to the elements it can gamify. Uber collects data that allow it to discard game features that do not work and refine those that do. And because its workers are contractors, the gamification strategies are not hemmed in by employment law.

Kevin Werbach, a business professor

who has written extensively on the subject, said that while gamification could be a force for good in the freelance-based “gig economy” — for example, by creating bonds among workers who do not share a physical space — there was a danger of abuse. “If what you’re doing is basically saying, ‘We’ve found a cheap way to get you to do work without paying you for it, we’ll pay you in badges that don’t cost anything,’ that’s a manipulative way to go about it,” he said.

For some drivers, that is precisely the effect. Scott Weber said he drove full time most weeks last year, picking up passengers in the Tampa area for both Uber and Lyft, yet made less than \$20,000 before expenses like gas and maintenance. “I was a business that had a loss,” said Mr. Weber, who is looking for another job. “I’m using payday loans.”

Still, when asked about the badges he earns while driving for Uber, Mr. Weber practically gushed. “I’ve got currently 12 excellent-service and nine great-conversation badges,” he said in an interview last month. “It tells me where I’m at.”

When asked whether Uber’s product managers and data scientists were akin to developers at a social gaming company like Zynga, Jonathan Hall, Uber’s

head of economic and policy research, accepted the analogy but rejected the implication.

“I think there’s something to that, but ultimately Zynga should worry mostly about how fun its games are rather than trying to get you to play a little bit more by some trick,” he said.

He argued that exploiting people’s psychological tics was unlikely to have more than a marginal effect on how long they played Zynga’s games or drove for Uber. It is like “icing on the cake,” he said.

More important, some of the psychological levers that Uber pulls to increase the supply of drivers have quite powerful effects.

Consider an algorithm called forward dispatch — Lyft has a similar one — that dispatches a new ride to a driver before the current one ends. Forward dispatch shortens waiting times for passengers, who may no longer have to wait for a driver 10 minutes away when a second driver is dropping off a passenger two minutes away.

Perhaps no less important, forward dispatch causes drivers to stay on the road substantially longer during busy periods.

Uber and Lyft explain this in essentially the same way. “Drivers keep telling us the worst thing is when they’re idle for a long time,” said Kevin Fan, the director of product at Lyft. “If it’s slow, they’re going to go sign off. We want to make sure they’re constantly busy.”

While this is unquestionably true, there is another way to think of the logic of forward dispatch: It overrides self-control.

There are aspects of the platforms that genuinely do increase drivers’ control over their work lives, as Uber frequently points out. Unlike most workers, an Uber driver can put in a few hours each day between dropping children off at school and picking them up in the afternoon.

Uber is even in the process of developing a feature that allows drivers to tell the app in advance that they need to arrive at a given location at a given time. “If you need to pick up your kids at soccer practice at 6 p.m.,” said Nundu Janakiram, the Uber official in charge of products that improve drivers’ experiences, “it will start to give you trips to take you in the general direction to get to a specific place in time.”



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# Business

## Tribes look on Trump’s coal pledge as a lifeline

CROW AGENCY, MONT.

Several Indian nations welcome end to rules established by Obama

BY JULIE TURKEWITZ

The pale yellow halls of the Crow government building here are nearly empty these days, with 1,000 of this tribe’s 1,300 employees recently laid off.

Across the way, Rebecca Ten Bear Reed and her children have no running water. And past the nearby grassy hills, families live a dozen to a home, playgrounds have fallen to tatters and this tribe of roughly 13,000 people is now turning to President Trump’s promise to revive coal for its future.

“This is the worst I’ve ever seen it. Ever,” said the tribe’s chief executive, Paul Little Light, explaining that revenue had dwindled as the Crow’s main resource fell from favor. “A lot of people are not Trump fans here. Very few. But we would be his best friends if he brought back coal.”

When thousands of Native Americans converged near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation last year, their stance against the Dakota Access oil pipeline became a global symbol of indigenous opposition to the pro-drilling, pro-mining agenda that Mr. Trump adopted.

But some of the largest tribes in the United States derive their budgets from the very fossil fuels that Mr. Trump has pledged to promote, including the Navajo in the Southwest and the Osage in Oklahoma, as well as smaller tribes like the Southern Ute in Colorado. And the Crow are among several Indian nations looking to the president’s promises to overturn Obama-era coal rules, pull back on regulations, or approve new oil and gas wells to help them lift their economies and wrest control from a federal bureaucracy they have often seen as burdensome.

The president’s executive order on March 28, which called for a rollback of President Barack Obama’s climate change rules, is a step toward some of these goals.

At the tribes’ side is Ryan Zinke, who as the new interior secretary is charged with protecting and managing Indian lands, which hold an estimated 30 percent of the nation’s coal reserves west of the Mississippi and 20 percent of known oil and gas reserves in the United States.

In a recent interview, Mr. Zinke noted that he had once been adopted into the Assiniboiné and Sioux tribes and said he would help native nations get fossil fuels to market.

“We have not been a good partner in this,” he said. “The amount of bureaucracy and paperwork and stalling in many ways has created great hardship on some of the poorest tribes.

“A war on coal is a war on the Crow people,” he continued. “President Trump has promised to end the war.”

Stripped of other resources, many tribes have had to rely on pit mines and oil pads to fund their budgets. This has bred conflict within not only Indian nations, but also individual hearts, with people torn between revenue that feeds their children and a deep commitment to protecting the environment.

Complicating the matter is the coal market. Although Mr. Trump has promised to revive the industry, power plants across the country are switching to cheap natural gas, leaving no guarantee that his policies will bring money back into tribal bank accounts.

“Unless there is severe restriction of natural gas production, there is not much U.S. coal can do to expand its market in the U.S.,” said Ian Lange, director of the mineral and energy economics



PHOTOGRAPHS BY HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Crow Agency, Mont., above, where the main resource is coal. Below left, Julianna Takes Horse folding laundry in her mother’s trailer; right, Houston Birdinground, left, and Junior Little Light. “A lot of people are not Trump fans here,” said the tribe’s chief executive, Paul Little Light. “But we would be his best friends if he brought back coal.”



program at the Colorado School of Mines.

Under the Trump administration, some native nations are asking for help as they work toward other revenue streams, including renewable energy. Others are seeking greater control of their own land, so they can create their own rules on harmful activities related to development, like gas flaring and wastewater dumping.

“It’s about sovereignty,” said Mark Fox, the chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, a tribal nation north of the Standing Rock reservation that has seen a boom in oil and gas.

Here on the 2.3-million-acre Crow Indian Reservation in southern Montana,

at least half of the tribe’s nonfederal budget comes from a single source: a vast single-pit mine at the edge of the reservation, called the Absaloka, which sends brown-black coal by rail to Minnesota’s largest power plant.

The Absaloka opened in 1974. It operates all day every day, employs about 170 people and has left a complex legacy. The work — shoveling coal dust, hauling through the night in trucks — is grueling.

But on the reservation, coal royalties, taxes and mine salaries have funded college educations, weddings and much-cherished homes with ponies corralled in the back. A coal payment every four months of about \$225 to every tribal citi-

zen puts food on tables, warm jackets on backs and gifts under Christmas trees.

Ms. Ten Bear Reed, the mother without running water, recently used her coal payout to buy a hot bath at a local motel. Normally, she sponge-cleans at home.

“I care about the environment, I really do,” said Ms. Ten Bear Reed, 37, who is raising two children on a \$9-an-hour casino job. “But when you see that money, then you don’t care. Because you’re getting the thing you need.”

Mr. Obama’s Clean Power Plan, which called for coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions, threw the future of the Absaloka mine, and the Crow budget, into question, said Kenneth Brien, the

tribe’s energy director. Already, coal revenue here has dwindled, contributing to the tribe’s current economic crisis.

“I want to make this clear: Obama was a great president,” Mr. Brien said. But his energy policies, he said, “would have devastated the tribe.”

In November, Big Horn County, which contains most of the reservation, cast 1,833 votes for Mr. Trump and 2,061 for Hillary Clinton, going significantly more Republican than it had in recent years. “Under Trump,” Mr. Brien added, “the door is opening.”

In 2013, the tribe made a deal with Cloud Peak Energy for a second coal mine, the Big Metal, which could bring

\$10 million to the Crow in the project’s first five years. Cloud Peak hoped to export that coal to Asia through a proposed terminal in Washington State. That terminal was vetoed by the Army Corps of Engineers under Mr. Obama, but Crow leaders hope to reopen the discussion.

One of the first tests of Mr. Trump’s commitment to coal could come in his administration’s response to the Navajo and Hopi, who derive millions of dollars from a coal-fired power plant nestled amid red rocks in Arizona, as well as an associated mine.

In February, operators of the plant, called the Navajo Generating Station, voted to shut it down at the end of 2019, 25 years ahead of schedule.

Closing the station could leave 1,885 people without work, counting associated jobs, said a Navajo spokesman, Mihio Manus.

“We’re in chaos over this whole plant closure,” said the Navajo president, Russell Begaye, who is asking the federal government to take majority ownership

Some of the largest tribes in the United States derive their budgets from fossil fuels.

of the plant and keep it running as the tribe develops other revenue. The federal government is one of several current owners.

“Back up what you’re saying about coal,” Mr. Begaye said, addressing Mr. Trump. “Give us 10 years.”

In the small, rectangular homes that dot the Crow reservation, hope for Mr. Trump’s administration is also accompanied by fear.

Tribal leaders are acutely aware of the need to diversify their economy. They have begun selling local bison meat, and hope to break ground soon on a hydroelectric project. There is talk of building a cement plant and solar and wind farms. But none of these endeavors are bringing in meaningful revenue at the moment.

At the same time, Mr. Trump has proposed cutting the budget of the Interior Department by 12 percent and the Health and Human Services budget by 18 percent, which could shrink services from Meals on Wheels to reservation law enforcement, education and health care.

Many here have also taken offense at comments made by Mr. Trump about minorities, including Native Americans, leaving them doubtful that he has their interests at heart.

And the president’s pro-fossil-fuel agenda has plenty of opposition from other tribes. The Northern Cheyenne, living on a reservation adjacent to the Crow, have rejected offers to mine their coal since the 1970s, despite persistent poverty. This past week, they filed a lawsuit challenging the administration’s decision to lift a moratorium on new coal leases.

“It was a cultural stand,” said L. Jace Killsback, the president of the Northern Cheyenne. “We’d really be contradicting what our ancestors stood for, we’d be contradicting the reason why the Creator made us, and that was far more important to us than having a coal mine on our reservation.”

Many people on the Crow side, when asked about Mr. Trump, speak about him as a long-shot gamble, with past disappointments not far from memory.

“We don’t know Donald Trump,” said Henry Old Horn, 74, a Crow elder. “All we know is that he’s a good, successful businessman. And we also know that he’s not your typical politician. It’s like rolling the dice. Who knows, he may be our savior.”

## A way to think about climate risk

### ● The Upshot

BY MICHAEL GREENSTONE

Say an investor had only two options for what to put money in: gold or stocks. Gold has an average annual rate of return of 3 percent, while the stock market delivers a healthier 5 percent. Which should the investor choose? Seems simple, right? Take the higher payout.

But annual averages can be deceiving. In fact, these two have very different risk profiles over time. Stocks tend to pay off steadily in good times when the economy is growing and we are relatively flush, but to decline in bad times. Gold might pay off next to nothing for years at a time and present real opportunity costs, but it delivers handsomely during unexpected economic crises.

Investing in gold is a type of insurance policy against tough times. Financial markets are revealing that investors are willing to accept a lower average return for that insurance, precisely because it helps to manage risk.

Last week, President Trump signed an executive order about climate change that runs counter to this insight from financial markets. The headlines rightly highlighted the dismantling of

climate policies like the Clean Power Plan. But buried in the details is an administrative tweak to the most important climate measurement in the federal government’s climate toolbox: the social cost of carbon.

The social cost of carbon, the estimated monetary damages caused by the release of an additional ton of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, is the linchpin for how the federal government values climate damages. It drives the cost-benefits analyses that have determined the stringency of such things as fuel economy standards and the Clean Power Plan.

Before the executive order, the social cost of carbon was set at about \$40 per metric ton of carbon released. Under the executive order, President Trump appears to be putting us on a path toward valuing climate damages at much less — possibly less than \$5 per metric ton of carbon.

How is it that simple to reduce the estimated cost of climate damages from carbon emissions by 90 percent or more? It all depends on how we choose to value future risks.

A concept known as the discount rate makes it possible to translate future damages into their present value. In 2009, President Obama convened an interagency working group, of which I

was a co-leader, to come up with a uniform method for estimating the social cost of carbon: the resulting number to be used across all federal agencies. Our group chose to emphasize estimates based on a discount rate of 3 percent.

The choice of a discount rate matters a great deal. Consider \$100 of damages that occur 100 years from now. Because these damages are so far in the future, it is natural to value them today at less

Financial markets tell us that spending a little extra now as insurance to protect against disruptive risk is wise.

than \$100 — but how much is not immediately apparent. This is where the discount rate comes in.

With a discount rate of 3 percent, these damages are worth \$5.20 today — that is, we would be willing to pay up to \$5.20 to avoid them. But Mr. Trump’s executive order points to using a 7 percent discount rate. In doing so, the administration is saying that it is worth only 12 cents today to prevent \$100 of damages in 100 years. (For the calculation, you divide \$100 by a figure that is one plus the rate — in these examples 1.03 for a 3 per-

cent discount rate and 1.07 for a 7 percent discount rate — for each of the 100 years, or to the 100th power.)

Although this might seem like an arcane administrative debate, the discount rate is the critical ingredient for how we value the future. And there is arguably no more consequential instance of the need to choose an appropriate discount rate than the case of climate change, because the greenhouse gases we release today will alter the climate for centuries.

At its core, using a lower discount rate to calculate the social cost of carbon means paying more to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions today. But, of course, paying more today means that those resources cannot be put to use for food, shelter and other goods.

Which discount rate best serves our interest in valuing climate risk? That’s where the financial markets’ lesson comes in.

When discounting future costs, the markets tell us to choose a discount rate that matches the risk profile of the investment. So if the risk acts like a tax on the economy (e.g., it reduces G.D.P. by a fixed percentage), a higher discount rate like the stock market’s average annual return of 5 percent would be justified. But if the risk is potentially disruptive, *CLIMATE*, PAGE 8

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BUSINESS

# Visa applications by the truckload

LAGUNA NIGUEL, CALIF.

BY MIRIAM JORDAN

The delivery trucks began arriving with their precious parcels before daybreak, lining up outside a massive government edifice that rises above Orange County's suburban sprawl.

On Monday, the starting gun went off on application season for skilled-worker visas, known as H-1B visas, which allow employers, primarily technology companies, to bring in foreign workers for three years at a time. For the last few years, the federal government has been so overwhelmed by applications that it has stopped accepting them within a week of opening day, hence the line of trucks trying to deliver applications before the doors close on the program for another year.

And this year, the rush has escalated to an all-out scramble because the future of the H-1B program is unclear.

Hailed by proponents as vital to American innovation, the program has also been criticized as a scheme to displace United States workers with cheaper foreign labor. President Trump has vowed to overhaul it, and lawmakers from both parties have drafted bills to alter it.

At campaign rallies, Mr. Trump introduced laid-off Americans who had been asked to train their foreign successors at companies, including Disney. “We won’t let this happen anymore,” he thundered in one stump speech about the practice, which he has called “outrageous” and “demeaning.”

This past weekend, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services announced a technical change that could make it harder for entry-level programmers to receive the visas, and on Monday, the Justice Department warned that it would investigate companies that it believed had overlooked qualified American workers.

“The Justice Department will not tolerate employers’ misusing the H-1B visa process to discriminate against U.S. workers,” Thomas Wheeler, the head of the department’s civil rights division, said in a statement.

Each year, 65,000 H-1B visas are made available to workers with bachelor’s degrees, and 20,000 more are earmarked for those with master’s degrees or higher.

When the gates swung open at the government processing center here on Monday, the first truck in line, a FedEx rig, carried 15,000 packages, said a courier, Andrew Langyo.

“We’re loaded, and we have more trucks coming,” said Mr. Langyo, who would return two hours later in the same truck with another haul.

Last year, the government received 236,000 applications in the first week before deciding it would accept no more. A computer randomly chooses the winners.

The average H-1B petition, a collection of forms and documents attesting to the bona fides of a job offer and the person chosen to fill it, is about two inches thick. But some files are six inches thick and weigh several pounds, according to Bill Yates, a former director of the Vermont Service Center, which also processes H-1B applications.

Mr. Yates recalled some mishaps, like the time a driver bound for the center in Vermont drove 50 miles unaware that his truck’s back door had swung open, spilling its cargo onto the road.

The visas are attractive not only to the companies that file the applications, but also to the workers themselves, who can become eligible for a green card while working on an H-1B.

Among the petitions expected to land in California’s center is that of Minh Nguyen, a software-design engineer from Vietnam who was sponsored for an H-1B by BitTitan, a cloud software company in Kirkland, Wash. It is his second attempt at a visa.

“In America, you’re in the center of new technology and cutting-edge changes in the I.T. industry,” said Mr. Nguyen, 25. “I would contribute directly to the company and to software development in the U.S.”



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EROS HOAGLAND FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Trucks, above, delivering visa petitions to the California Service Center. Below, some of the boxes. “We’re loaded, and we have more trucks coming,” one FedEx courier said.



In 2014, the last year for which information is available, just 13 outsourcing firms accounted for a third of all granted visas. The top recipients were Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Wipro, all based in India.

The companies, which subcontract their employees to banks, retailers and other businesses in the United States to do programming, accounting and other work, often inundate the immigration service with tens of thousands of applications.

BitTitan, a growing company that hopes to hire 60 engineers in the next 12 months, is submitting six applications. “We are trying to fill specific positions around cloud and artificial intelligence,” the chief executive, Geeman Yip, said. “If we can’t fill them, our innovation suffers.”

Several bipartisan bills in the Senate

and the House seek to make companies give more priority to American workers before they fill jobs with H-1B visas. They also seek to raise the minimum pay for the jobs, which depend on skill level and location: A computer systems analyst in Pittsburgh, for example, must make at least \$49,000 under current regulations. The theory is that higher pay will eliminate some of the rationale for importing workers.

A draft of a presidential executive order on “protecting American jobs and workers by strengthening the integrity of foreign worker visa programs” was distributed widely in late January but never signed. Then, without warning, Citizenship and Immigration Services published a memo on its website over the weekend that could affect many applications.

Specifically, companies seeking to im-

port computer programmers at the lowest pay levels will have to prove that the work they perform qualifies as “specialty” labor, which is what the H-1B visas were created for. “There will be greater scrutiny of the role the company wants to fill,” said Lynden Melmed, a lawyer in Washington and a former chief counsel for the immigration service.

The measure appears to be directed mainly at outsourcing firms, rather than the big technology companies, which tend to hire workers at higher skill and pay levels.

In a statement, the National Association of Software and Services Companies, the main trade group for India’s outsourcing industry, said, “The H-1B visa system exists specifically because the U.S. has a persistent shortage of high-skilled I.T. talent.”

The group said that its members followed all the program’s rules, and that the change would have little impact. “It is aimed at screening out less-qualified workers, whereas our members tend to provide well-credentialed workers to help U.S. companies fill their skills gaps and compete globally,” it said.

Even before the memo and the Justice Department’s warning, fears about the future of the H-1B program were making this year more pressure-packed than most. “Just to make sure the petitions get in, almost every client demanded that theirs arrive on the first day,” said Greg McCall, a lawyer at Perkins Coie in Seattle who prepared 150 applications.

Inside the federal building, a formidable structure that has provided backdrops for movies including “Coma” and “Outbreak,” the logistical dance unfolded over two floors. In the mailroom, about 40 people wearing blue gloves sat around tables opening packages that arrived nonstop in six-foot-high bins. In a huge warehouse, those same packages were separated according to whether the applicants had bachelor’s or master’s degrees.

All told, 1,500 workers were involved, with a second shift expected to stretch past normal business hours.

“This is the day we prepare for months and months in advance,” said Donna P. Campagnolo, the center’s deputy director.

Trucks came and went all day, with some couriers, including from FedEx, staggering their deliveries to avoid having dozens of trucks backed up at the gate.

Some smaller delivery companies received a piece of the action, too. One courier, Fernando Salas, pulled up in a red Suzuki station wagon stuffed with 10 boxes. “I have 109 envelopes,” he said. “That is all that fits in here.”

It was all surprisingly low-tech for a program used primarily for high-tech jobs. Asked why the government had not digitized the process, Ms. Campagnolo said: “There’s obviously a lot of paper. There’s no denying it.”

The biggest challenge, she said, is “trash overflow.”

*Vindu Goel contributed reporting from San Francisco, and Nick Wingfield from Seattle.*

## Prices soar for land in quiet corner of China

SHANGHAI

### Announcement of plans for Xiongjian sets off real estate buying frenzy

BY AILIN TANG

A residential and industrial area roughly 80 miles south of Beijing once barely registered on China’s economic map. Consisting mostly of apartment buildings, villages, wetlands and empty fields, it has primarily been known for its donkey burgers.

But now the area around Xiongjian County has become another example of the frothiness of the Chinese property market — a market that many experts warn could have severe repercussions for China and the world if it stumbles.

On Saturday, China declared that an area that sprawls across three local counties will someday become Xiongan New Area, a gleaming economic powerhouse reminiscent of earlier developments that helped put China’s economy on its fast-growth trajectory. When completed, it will cover nearly 800 square miles, offer favorable regulation to businesses and become a modern urban area crucial to redeveloping the Rust Belt around Beijing.

Almost immediately, speculators pounced, setting off a property buying frenzy and sending shares of construction companies soaring. It has been such a chaotic market that local authorities have been forced to freeze purchases and close real estate offices. Chinese social media showed photos of new property developments and real estate offices with signs saying they had been temporarily closed.

The price spikes have been fast and furious.

In the town of Baigou, about 12 miles north of Xiongjian, prices for an apartment jumped to 12,000 renminbi per square meter — or more than \$160 per square foot — from 8,750 renminbi within hours after the announcement.

### Consisting mostly of apartment buildings, villages and empty fields, the area has primarily been known for donkey burgers.

according to Wen Yunlong, a local real estate agent. On Sunday, it rose by an additional 3,000 renminbi, he said.

“Prices have gone up every day,” Mr. Wen said.

Since Saturday, he said, potential buyers had lined up at his agency. “I have been working from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. these days,” he said. “Last night, I worked till midnight.”

He added: “I haven’t seen so many people here before. It went crazy.”

On Monday, Hong Kong-traded shares of the BBMG Corporation, a Beijing cement maker, jumped nearly 35 percent. Shares of other Hong Kong-traded property-related firms active in the area rose by smaller amounts. The Hong Kong market was closed on Tuesday. Markets in mainland China were closed on Monday and Tuesday for a holiday.

Property is a major investment vehicle in China, where the stock market has long been seen as unreliable and where the authorities tightly limit how much money can be sent outside the country. That has led to surging prices — and worries about bubbles — in a number of cities. While mortgages in China are not as big or as common as they are in the United States, a surge of lending to home buyers has prompted worries about what might happen if China’s property market bursts.

In declaring its intent to build Xiongan, the Chinese government invited comparisons to the southern city of Shenzhen and the Pudong area of Shanghai. Shenzhen was part of China’s earliest experiments with private enterprise after the death of Mao Zedong, and it remains one of the richest parts of China. Pudong, home of many of the gleaming skyscrapers that define Shanghai’s skyline, became one of China’s most successful and high-profile development projects.

Xiongan will become “a demonstration area for innovative development,” Xi Jinping, China’s president, told the official state media.

Xiongan also fits into China’s grand plan to create a vast urban area uniting the capital city of Beijing with the nearby port city of Tianjin and with Hebei Province, the industrial province between them.

Called Jing-Jin-Ji, the area — which would include Xiongan — will become a hive of economic activity that is intended to replace Hebei’s dependence on smokestack industries like steel and put the region on a path to rival Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Right now, the Xiongan area has less than 1 percent of the economic output of Beijing, according to state media. It is part of an area known for its donkey burgers — sandwiches with roasted donkey meat, which tastes something like pastrami.

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## What markets teach about climate risk

CLIMATE, FROM PAGE 7

CLIMATE, like a severe recession or worse, then markets point to a lower discount rate, perhaps like gold’s annual average return or even lower.

In this way, financial markets tell us that spending a little extra now as insurance to protect against potentially disruptive risk is a wise strategy. This lesson was most recently illustrated during the Great Recession. While the stock market declined by 53 percent from December 2007 to March 2009, gold’s value increased by 14 percent in this period.

Investors who had put some portion of their investments in gold — as an insurance policy — reaped the benefits as gold outperformed the stock market by almost 70 percent at exactly the moment that the job market was deteriorating and other investments were declining in value. In comparison, households with no such insurance policy were left completely exposed to the Great Recession.

Could climate change be broadly disruptive? The science suggests that the answer is yes. There is a lot that we don’t know with certainty about climate change: How much will temperature increase for a given increase in greenhouse gas concentrations? How much will sea levels rise?

Although we do not have certain answers to these questions, the range of potential answers includes very disruptive possibilities.

This means that climate mitigation could protect us from possibly catastrophic events — mass migration, crop failures, a jarring sea-level rise and spikes in mortality because of high temperatures.

If those risks don’t materialize, there will have been costs to spending today on climate mitigation. But if those risks are real, using a low discount rate to choose the degree of climate mitigation today will be like having invested in gold before the Great Recession.



# Opinion

## Britain's trains don't run on time. Blame capitalism.

The government won't recognize it, but railway privatization has been a costly fiasco.

Owen Jones

**LONDON** If how the railways run is a guide to the state of a nation, then it tells you something that Britain is in the middle of its biggest railway strike since 1994. Not coincidentally, that was the year the national rail network was privatized by the Conservative government of Prime Minister John Major.

A labor dispute has been simmering for nearly a year on the routes managed by Southern, a train operator that, as the name suggests, runs crucial commuter services between London and the South Coast. In December, the crisis escalated when around 1,000 train drivers joined in a strike action against Southern's parent company, Govia Thameslink Railway, whose network also includes the Gatwick Express airport line.

In one day, about 300,000 passengers had their journeys delayed and disrupted. The strike action has been repeated every month since, including a networkwide stoppage

**The long-running battle between rail unions and the company is estimated to have cost Britain's economy £300 million.**

The details, of course, are local, and may even seem parochial. The dispute centers on Govia's plan to remove guards from trains. The unions believe this would threaten not just jobs but also the safety of passengers. The industrial upheaval on a rail artery critical to one of the world's largest economies tells a story that transcends borders, however: of the perils of introducing market ideology into key public services, a project driven not by the needs of passengers but by uncompromising dogma.

On the eve of the great sell-off of the 1990s, Mr. Major pledged that rail privatization would bring a "better, cheaper and more effective service for the commuter." To repeat that promise to Govia's beleaguered passengers today would at best provoke mirthless laughter. On Southern, passenger satisfaction slumped to 21 percent this year; nearly half of those surveyed reported delays in their last journey.

How did we get here? Not on a Southern train, obviously: The company has become a byword for overcrowding, delays and understaffing.

By introducing competition, privatization was supposed to make rail travel more affordable. According to research by Action for Rail, a group that is critical of privatization, Britain's

rail commuters spend up to six times more on rail travel than their European counterparts have to. Same-day return tickets on airplanes from British cities to European ones can be significantly cheaper than same-day train travel between British cities. While British workers are suffering the most protracted wage squeeze since the Napoleonic wars, rail fares in recent years have gone up at twice the rate of wage increases.

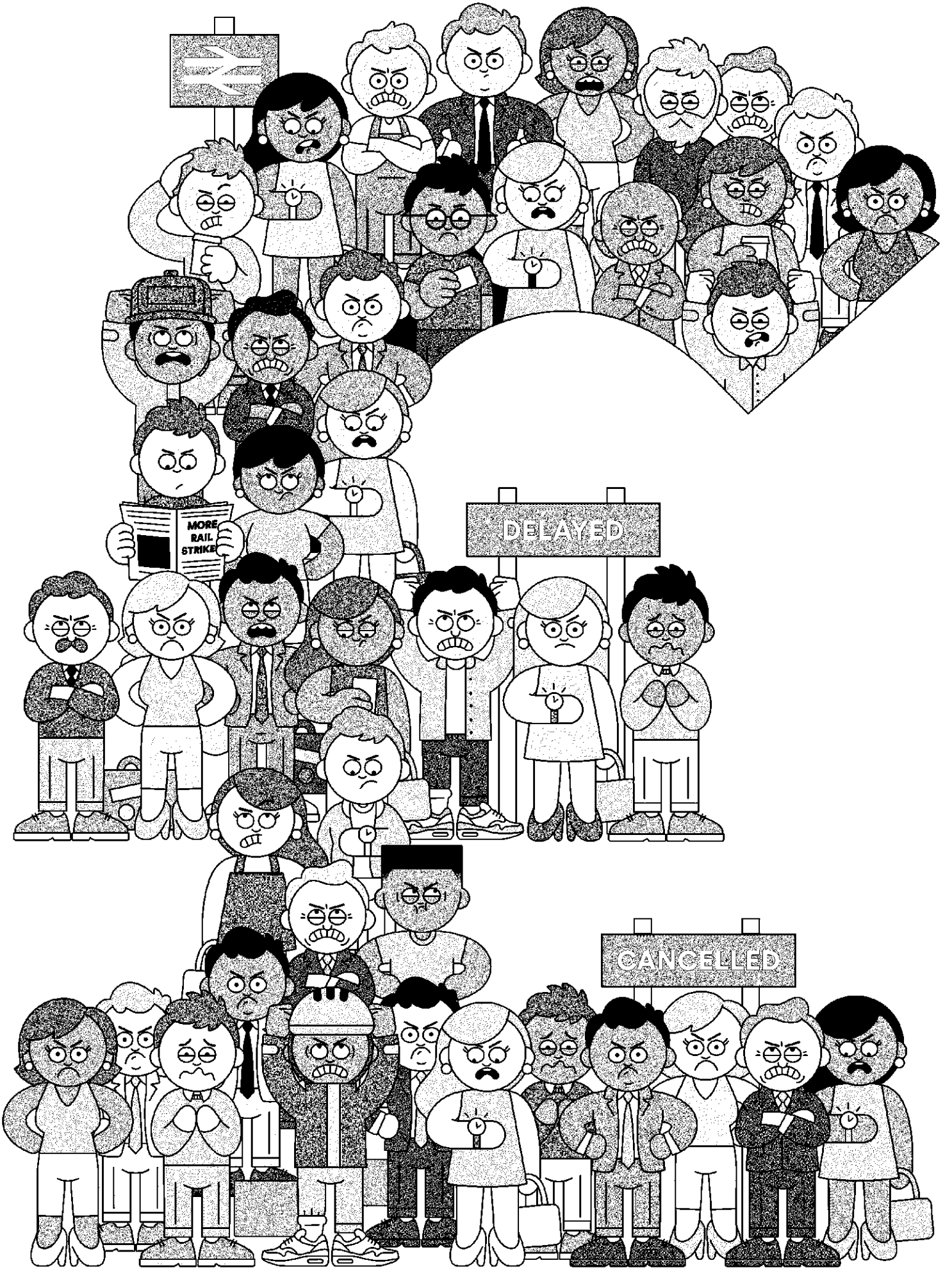
But more Britons than ever are using the rail network, crow the champions of privatization. That isn't because of the success of the sell-off, though, but is because of changes in the economy: More and more people are finding that they have to commute greater distances for work, for example. Where the networks themselves have improved, it's the state — not any private company — that has underwritten or financed modernization. Where the train operators have been left to their own devices, choosing whether or not to invest in new rolling stock, the result is clear: On some rush-hour train services into London, a third of passengers are forced to stand.

The privatizers claimed that competition would lift standards of service, put the needs of the consumer first, reduce the burden on the taxpayer, rid the system of inefficiencies and drive down prices. On all scores, the privatization of Britain's railways is an embarrassment. Look no further than the current dispute on Southern to see how dysfunctional the privatized system is.

Govia is contracted to run the Southern franchise — and is paid about £1 billion (or \$1.24 billion), a year by the government to do so. In return, revenue from ticket sales goes directly back to the government. Yet if train services are delayed or canceled, it is the government — or rather, the taxpayer — that refunds the bitter commuters. The company itself therefore has no incentive to settle with the unions; arguably, it is being paid by the Tory government to keep up the fight. Yet the transport secretary, Chris Grayling, pretends to have no hand in the matter, saying he cannot "wave a wand" to resolve the dispute.

Little wonder that a recent poll found that 58 percent of Britons believe rail privatization is a complete or partial failure, with only 13 percent describing it as a partial or complete success. A 2013 report commissioned by unions, "The Great Train Robbery," found that British taxpayers spend far more on the privatized system than they did on the old nationalized model. Part of the reason for that is that the government subsidies built into the system in large part end up as dividends for shareholders, rather than being invested in upgrades.

Would public ownership achieve better results? As the right-leaning Daily Telegraph recently pointed out, when a troubled private rail franchise run by a company named Connex was taken into public ownership from 2003 to 2006, performance, punctuality and



DAN WOODGER

passenger satisfaction all improved. Similarly, after the East Coast network was renationalized in 2009, it became the most efficient rail franchise in Britain, needing less public subsidy than any other and returning hundreds of millions of pounds in revenues to the public purse. To complete the experiment, when it was again privatized in 2015, ticket prices on some journeys doubled and public satisfaction declined. Not that public ownership has been banished from Britain's railways — but only other European governments are free to buy up Britain's rail networks. Foreign governments running British railway networks include France, Germany and the Netherlands. The important difference, of course, is that foreign state-owned companies are not accountable to British passengers (as a nationalized

company is to British voters). Considering all the humiliating failures, why have successive governments — both Conservative and New Labour — continued to pursue privatization with such unbending zeal? In short, to undermine organized labor. Britain has the "the most restrictive union laws in the Western world," Tony Blair complained, shortly before winning election in 1997. And Mr. Grayling has made his antipathy to unions very clear — blaming them for the dispute, accusing the opposition leader of fomenting strike action, and even hinting at legislation to outlaw strikes. Britain's long-suffering traveling public is not impressed. A 2015 poll found that a clear majority of Britons supported renationalizing railways (as well as water and other utilities); strikingly, even a plurality of Conser-

vative voters backed such a move. This isn't a mass delusion; it's based on the experience of millions of passengers who feel ripped off and exasperated by poor service. Beyond the "travel chaos" headlines and lost millions of economic activity, the failure of Britain's rail privatization opens broader questions that resonate beyond this country. Does it really make sense for the essential services we all depend upon to be for profit? The evidence from this two-decade experiment is a direct challenge to those who believe in the innate superiority of the private sector. What a way to run a railroad.

**OWEN JONES** is a columnist for *The Guardian* and the author of *"The Establishment: And How They Get Away With It."*

## Trump's gifts to China

The president's foreign policy: Shout loud and carry a little stick.



Roger Cohen

**SINGAPORE** The United States meets China this week in a position of weakness. Since taking office, Donald Trump has handed China a strategic gift by abandoning a trade pact designed to offset Chinese power in the region, been obliged to grovel after offending China over Taiwan, and turned President Xi Jinping of China into an unlikely poster boy for climate change concern and an open global trading system.

So much for the art of the deal; to Asian nations like Singapore worried about China's aggressive territorial expansion in the South China Sea, American policy under Trump has looked more like a blink-first exercise.

Now Trump — having given the Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, the full Mar-a-Lago - is obliged to give

Xi the same at his Florida resort. (Angela Merkel, merely the German chancellor, need not apply.)

Top of the Florida menu is North Korea and how far China will help Trump in rolling back Kim Jong-un's nuclear and missile program. The thousands of acres of new land built by China in the form of artificial islands or expanded reefs in the Spratly Islands off the coast of the Philippines — an extraordinary act of lawless territorial expansionism — will also be part of the discussions.

Then of course there's bilateral trade and Trump's unhappiness with the \$347 billion U.S. deficit last year — although with North Korea's belligerent Kim now in a position to hit Japan, that feels like a manageable irritant in the symbiotic U.S.-Chinese economic entanglement.

China will not satisfy the United States on North Korea. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has said "strategic patience" is over. But what does that mean? A pre-emptive American strike is nearly unthinkable given Kim's ability to blow up Seoul. It sounds like what the Trump administration has specialized in: bluster. The Trump foreign policy doctrine: Shout loud and carry a little stick. When Trump tells The Financial Times that he can "to-

tally" solve North Korea without China's help, everyone shrugs at his saber-rattling.

China has leverage over Kim, but its "strategic patience" with him is infinite. Its priority is the survival of the totalitarian regime as a buffer. The dictator is China's insurance against a nuclear-armed united Korea at its doorstep. Millions of North Koreans flooding over its border in the event of a regime collapse is the last thing China wants. To Trump's demands to deliver Kim, China is likely to shrug. Especially if the president

(unlikely scenario) does what he should and tells Xi that China's artificial-island push for regional dominance in the South China Sea is unacceptable.

In the long run any effective North Korea policy will probably have to begin with acceptance that denuclearization is no longer possible and stringent curtailment of Kim is the best bet.

Diplomacy is a word that Trump might usefully add to his vocabulary. For countries from Vietnam to Sin-

gapore, its absence has been alarming. Trump's decision to rip up the Trans-Pacific Partnership, an ambitious free-trade arrangement including many countries in the region but not China, was reckless. China's pressure on Singapore to choose between the United States and Beijing — something Singapore rightly refuses to do — is typical of the increasingly heavy-handed Chinese regional approach. With the T.P.P. dead, China is emboldened.

Already last year it had impounded some Singaporean military vehicles to signal impatience with Singapore's close relations with Taiwan. It has also been critical of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore when he raises concerns over China's South China Sea aggrandizement. For the Chinese, "silence is golden" when it comes to all that new land for runways, radars and the like in waters far from its shore. But for Singapore, the sea is its lifeline. It cannot stay quiet; and it needs offsetting American power in Asia to keep those sea-lanes open.

Here we get to the nub of what should be on the Trump-Xi agenda. As Razeen Sally, an associate professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, told me: "In the end it's about

free people and open societies. Are we going to have more or less of that in this part of the world? That is why more Chinese domination in Asia would be so ominous."

But of course the Trump foreign policy is an experiment in a valueless, transactional approach to the world from which the American idea has been stripped.

Anthony Miller, an American businessman in Japan, wrote to me recently about a meeting with a senior Japanese university official who had asked him why Japan should align itself with America if there is no longer "a mutual belief in democracy, free trade and liberal values."

Miller concluded of Trump: "The damage he is doing to the underpinnings of liberal democracy is tremendous."

When Lee, the Singapore prime minister, called Trump in early December he mentioned the free trade agreement between the United States and Singapore. The then president-elect, I was told, had no idea of its existence. Nor did Trump know that the United States has a trade surplus with Singapore.

Unpreparedness is bad. It's worse when combined with bluster and recklessness. That's why China is winning.



OPINION

The New York Times

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ENABLING AN ENEMY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

President Trump lavished praise on Egypt’s President Sisi, an authoritarian leader who needs to change his ways.

Yet that’s what President Trump did on Monday in not just welcoming but celebrating one of the most authoritarian leaders in the Middle East, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt, a man responsible for killing hundreds of Egyptians, jailing thousands of others and, in the process, running his country and its reputation into the ground.

The expressions of mutual admiration that permeated the Oval Office were borderline unctuous. Mr. Trump praised Mr. Sisi for doing a “fantastic job” and assured him he has a “great friend and ally in the United States and in me.” In return, Mr. Sisi, who had been barred from the White House during the Obama administration, and who craved the respect such a visit would afford, expressed his “deep appreciation and admiration” for Mr. Trump’s “unique personality.”

Mr. Trump acknowledged that the two countries “have a few things” they don’t agree on, but he pointedly did not mention the abysmal human rights record of Mr. Sisi’s government, which the State Department and human rights groups have accused of gross abuses, including torture and unlawful killings.

Nor, apparently, did Mr. Trump raise the case of Aya Hijazi, an American citizen who works with street children. She was arrested in May 2014 on specious human trafficking charges and imprisoned for 33 months in violation of Egyptian law. Her case has been a cause célèbre among human rights groups, though she is but one of 40,000 people who have been detained, most for purely political reasons.

Mr. Trump has now made it transparently clear that human rights and democracy are not his big concerns and that he places more value on Egypt as a partner in the fight against the Islamic State. What he does not grasp is that, while Egypt is an important country, it cannot be a force for regional stability nor the partner Mr. Trump imagines on counterterrorism or anything else if Mr. Sisi does not radically change his ways. Mr. Sisi’s repression against enemies real and imagined, his management of the economy and inability to train, educate and create jobs for his nation’s youth can only fuel more anger and unrest.

Mr. Sisi’s task is to undertake economic and political reforms that benefit all Egyptians, not just the military. The White House spectacle might have been worth it if Mr. Trump had tried to make these points to his guest.

A PEEK INTO THE WHITE HOUSE SWAMP

Officials’ financial disclosure forms raise more questions than they answer and provide no assurance of ethical behavior.

The White House boasted that the release of financial disclosures for dozens of administration officials exemplified President Trump’s “commitment to ensure an ethical and transparent government.” The Friday night document dump did nothing of the sort.

The opaque, incomplete filings — which met the bare legal requirements for disclosures — merely raise more questions than they answer about the byzantine dealings of the richest White House in history.

Besides, Mr. Trump has no commitment to ethics or transparency. If the boss doesn’t care about accountability, why should anyone else?

Here’s a good reason: Unlike the president, for whom conflict of interest laws don’t apply, staff members could go to jail for actions that affect their financial interests.

So how did these officials manage their business dealings during the months they avoided disclosing them?

In 2011, Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff, look a leave of absence as partner in the Wisconsin law firm of Michael Best & Friedrich. Why then was he paid more than \$300,000 in bonuses and other payments in 2016, after he quit? Did Mr. Priebus’ big payday have anything to do with his new job in the Trump administration, and his firm’s boast to potential clients that it possesses the “connections to help you shape public policy?”

Kellyanne Conway’s filing indicates she still has a financial interest in her firm, the polling company/ WomanTrend. Is she recusing herself from White House initiatives that could benefit her company and clients?

How has Kathleen “K. T.” McFarland, deputy national security adviser, managed the potential conflicts of interest presented by her stock holdings, including in Amazon, which is pitching government cybersecurity business?

If the administration were committed to “an ethical and transparent government,” Friday’s releases would be a first step in an extensive, public examination of these officials’ holdings, followed by steps to avoid potentially criminal conflicts. We’ll be watching — but we won’t hold our breath.

Congo and the dictator’s dilemma

Anjan Sundaram

**LONDON** President Joseph Kabila of Congo shows no sign of stepping down. He reached the end of his constitutional two-term limit last year, but after months of delays for which Mr. Kabila blamed incomplete voter lists, one of his ministerial colleagues argued that presidential elections — estimated to cost \$1.8 billion — are an expense Congo cannot afford.

Mr. Kabila’s dallying has led to consternation in Congo and around the world that he is violating Congo’s constitution and setting himself up as a president for life. The United States government, a major donor to Congo, imposed sanctions on senior Congolese officials last year in an apparent effort to pressure the president.

Representative Ed Royce, a Republican from California and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House, has fiercely criticized Mr. Kabila. The uncertainty surrounding Mr. Kabila’s exit has led to fears that Congo, where five million people have died in wars fought against six nations over the past two decades, may fall into a fresh round of conflict and again destabilize the region.

At stake is Congo’s fledgling experiment with democracy, whose beginning I reported on in 2006. Mr. Kabila was elected president that year in Congo’s first free vote in four decades. The billion-dollar democratic transition was a moment of great hope, meant to draw a line under the worst war in the world and a hundred-year history of brutal dictatorship and colonial rule.

But Mr. Kabila’s insistence on holding onto power has confronted Congolese, yet again, with authoritarian repression. Dozens of protesters have been killed by state security forces since Congo’s president violated his term limits, continuing a wave of killings and arrests of opposition activists and journalists.

Last week, the bodies of two United Nations human rights investigators — Michael Sharp, an American citizen, and Zaida Catlan, a Swedish national — and Betu Tshintela, their Congolese interpreter, were found outside the city of Kananga. They had disappeared in March near an area where leaked video footage showed Congo’s Army killing civilians.

The Catholic Church is leading the scramble for peace in Congo, and it could still succeed. On New Year’s Eve it negotiated an agreement between Mr. Kabila’s party and opposition groups — including the popular presidential

**Joseph Kabila’s reluctance to step down has led to fears that Congo may see renewed violence.**

aspirant Moise Katumbi — that would instate an opposition prime minister and calls for elections this year. It stipulates that Mr. Kabila would step down. The church-led agreement is a vast improvement from an earlier pact, negotiated by the

African Union and the South African Development Community, which favored Mr. Kabila by excluding Mr. Katumbi and Congo’s most senior opposition leader, Etienne Tshisekedi.

But Mr. Kabila ignored the new agreement, and leading civil society groups fear he will refuse to leave. The Catholic Church, which has long served as a voice of the population and a counter to Congo’s repressive leaders, has reported several attacks that it says are linked to its opposition to Mr. Kabila.

With Mr. Tshisekedi’s death in February and Mr. Katumbi forced into exile, Mr. Kabila has been rid of his main opponents who might have held him accountable.

If Mr. Kabila does not go willingly, he makes his departure increasingly likely to be accompanied by armed violence. Congo’s president finds himself in a dictator’s dilemma. If he gives up con-

trol of the military and remains in Congo, he and his immense wealth become targets for his enemies. Mr. Kabila would most likely need guarantees of protection, or have to live in exile. The longer he defies the Constitution, however, the harder it will become to cajole him to hold elections, and possibly leave.

Mr. Kabila was an initiator of peace accords between warring factions in 2003 that led to the end of much of Congo’s deadly war. Unlike other regional strongmen such as Rwanda’s Paul Kagame and Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe, who thrive off power and cast themselves as the embodiment of their nations, Mr. Kabila governed Congo like a phantom president, isolating himself in his presidential palace, presiding over dysfunction and disorder.

But the signs of Mr. Kabila’s repression have always been present. In the run-up to the 2006 presidential elections I watched Congolese police whip unarmed opposition protesters with metal chains. The protesters and I were backed into spirals of barbed wire by police firing guns and tear gas. After the announcement of Mr. Kabila’s victory, a gun battle between forces loyal to Mr. Kabila and to his rival, Jean-Pierre Bemba, broke out in Kinshasa. I hid close to Mr. Bemba’s home and heard the artillery from Mr. Kabila’s forces blast through the walls.

Congo’s president has delivered on some of his promises of peace. In 2013, he successfully enlisted South Africa and Tanzania to militarily quell the M23 movement, a Rwandan-backed Tutsi rebellion that had caused chaos in eastern Congo. Mr. Kabila has sent several Congolese warlords to face trial at the International Criminal Court. Congo’s economy has reportedly grown at over 7 percent in recent years, according to government figures, but last month the World Bank downgraded forecasts to 2.5 percent from 7 percent.

Mr. Kabila has softened criticism from his Western allies by ensuring that they profited from Congo’s wealth. Huge mineral concessions were handed

to corporations from countries that finance Congo’s elections and that support Mr. Kabila’s government with foreign aid. The American company Phelps Dodge has been granted rights to “hills worth billions of dollars” in cobalt and copper. A monopoly on Congo’s uranium — used in the atom bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki — was granted in a secretive contract to the French energy company Areva.

A United States diplomat told me that Western aid was often linked to promises of deals for minerals essential to Western technologies, from military aircraft to cellphones. Western mining businesses have also been linked to grave crimes.

I reported on the logistical support that Anvil Mining, a company financed by the World Bank, provided for a massacre of Congolese in 2004. United Nations evidence of Anvil’s implication in the massacre has not been made public by the World Bank. Congo’s government has also remained silent on the issue.

Congo’s history of violence has led even well-intentioned Western powers to act as though peace is sufficient for Congolese.

Mr. Kabila’s hunger to hold on to power is no surprise. He never offered to build the institutions — transparent elections, an independent judiciary, a free press — that Mr. Tshisekedi insisted were essential for Congo’s long-term stability. Mr. Kabila is so worried about the crowds that would greet the dead opposition leader’s corpse that he has not let it return to Kinshasa from Brussels for burial.

Reformist Congolese voices need to be heard. Whether by innocence or design, supporting authoritarian leaders like Mr. Kabila, who promise peace, only reinforces the cycle of violence, leaving millions of Congolese yet again facing a turbulent, uncertain future.

**ANJAN SUNDARAM** is the author of “*Stringer: A Reporter’s Journey in the Congo*” and “*Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship*.”



JOHN BOMPENGO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Joseph Kabila of Congo inspecting corn produced with the help of South African farmers in 2015.

Let’s go for a win on opioids



David Brooks

The health care bill failed. The odds of successful tax reform are remote, and in any case an actual proposal is months away. If we lived in a normal country our president would use the current moment to try to get a win — to try to pass something that would help people, demonstrate that Washington can function and rebuild his brand.

If we lived in a normal country the Trump White House would launch a major initiative to combat opiate addiction. There are roughly two and a half million Americans addicted to opioids. Between 1999 and 2015, the number of those who died rose from 8,200 annually to 33,000. That means that over two years more Americans died of opiate addiction than died in the entire Vietnam War.

As Christopher Caldwell pointed out in a powerful essay called “American Carnage” in First Things, the opioid crisis is killing at a higher rate than crack or any other recent plague. At the peak of the crack epidemic there

were about two deaths per 100,000 Americans. Today, the opioid epidemic is killing 10.3 per 100,000.

The national spotlight has been put on this crisis, but the situation is getting worse, not better. The Washington Post reported that in Stark County, Ohio, for example, the number of opioid-related deaths has increased by 20 percent in the past year. The county just asked the state to send over a cold storage trailer because the morgue is already full.

And the crisis is hitting exactly in those places where Trump voters live, especially struggling rural areas in Appalachia, the Upper Midwest, and the working-class areas of New England. That’s why Trump was so vocal about it during the campaign. He promised he would give every sufferer “access to the care and the help that he or she needs.” He told one Ohio town hall, “We’re going to spend the money, we’re going to get that habit broken.”

It’s a challenging problem. In 12 states there are more opioid prescriptions than people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, those who are addicted to prescription painkillers are 40 times more likely to be addicted to heroin.

As Caldwell writes: “If you take too much heroin, your breathing slows until you die. Unfortunately, the drug sets an addictive trap that is sinister and subtle. It provides a euphoria — a feeling of contentment, simplification and release — which users swear has no equal.

Users quickly develop a tolerance. . . . The dosage required to attain the feeling the user originally experienced rises until it is *higher* than the dosage that will kill him.”

The most dangerous day for an addict is the day he’s released from some sort of custody. On this day the dosage that he handled comfortably two weeks before could cause his death.

To its credit, the Trump administration has launched a commission to see

**This is the moment for a war on a problem that is getting worse.**

how the federal government can tackle this crisis. Trump already appears to support Obama administration spending levels on opioid addiction. But Trump could propose legislation fully funding the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. When that was passed, by overwhelming bipartisan majorities in 2016, the price tag was put at \$1 billion. But only a portion of that has actually been appropriated.

Special focus could be put on adding treatment centers. According to a 2014 federal study, about 90 percent of those who met the criteria for a drug abuse disorder didn’t get treatment. Some live in counties where there are zero facilities.

Something like half of all sufferers drop out of treatment within a few

months, so it might be worth thinking about involuntary commitment too. Sally Satel has been treating people addicted to heroin for a quarter century and writes for The Wall Street Journal:

“I speak from long experience when I say that few heavy users can simply take a medication and embark on a path to recovery. It often requires a healthy dose of benign paternalism and, in some cases, involuntary care through civil commitment. Many families see such legal action as the only way to interrupt the self-destructive cycle in which their loved ones are caught.”

This isn’t just about painkillers run amok. Instant and slow-motion suicide by alcohol and a range of other drugs are rising at the same time. And these addictions and deaths are happening in the most socially and economically barren parts of the country.

An anti-opioid effort won’t be effective unless it’s part of a broader effort at social and economic reweaving, a set of efforts to either help people move out of rural, blighted communities or to find jobs and social networks while there.

Trump could talk about many other approaches—medical marijuana as a substitute for pain relief, holding pharmaceutical companies more accountable—but ultimately this is a disease that grows in despair.

Trump was elected out of that despair, and a big anti-opioid push would be a first and politically viable step toward attacking it.



# Now Netflix is all thumbs

Tom Vanderbilt

Netflix, as you may have heard, is killing off its stars. At a recent news conference at its headquarters in Los Gatos, Calif., the company announced it was shedding its former one-to-five-star rating system in favor of binary digits: namely, thumbs up or thumbs down.

“Now it’s easier to tell us what you like,” the site promises.

The writing had been on the wall. When I visited the company in 2012, full of questions about how it turned my methodical rating behavior into recommendations about what to watch next, Netflix’s vice president of product innovation, Todd Yellin, told me the firm was “de-emphasizing” ratings in its algorithms.

Stars were on the out for several reasons. For one, Netflix was transitioning from a DVD rental business to a streaming company. It was less reliant on you telling it what you liked (via ratings), because it could already tell what you liked — simply by analyzing what you had watched.

And there tended to be a gulf between the two behaviors. People rated aspirationally, but they watched situationally. Yes, you did give That Important Documentary five stars when you got around to watching it, but at the end of a trying day at the office, you more often settled on viewing some pleasing pap like “The Ridiculous 6.”

This sort of virtue signaling, often undercut by divergent behavior, is everywhere — witness the discrepancies that sometimes occur between polling and actual voting in elections. And it’s generally a one-way process: No one gives Adam Sandler’s latest five stars and then secretly watches “The Sorrow and the Pity.”

But why aspirational reviewing should happen on Netflix is intriguing, given that no one else sees your Netflix queue. It’s just you, clicking your way to a better version of yourself.

Another reason for Netflix’s shift from stars to thumbs is that, in the term of data scientists, star ratings are statistically “noisy.” I may have spent a few minutes rationalizing my three-and-a-half star rating, but from a recommendation standpoint, that wasn’t all that much more useful than simply saying whether I liked it or not.

The music company Pandora once



ELISE AMENDOLA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

tried to solicit listeners’ opinions on why they thumbed a song up or down. The experiment quickly ended when the company realized that there was essentially nothing they could do with the wildly varying responses.

And even when people are given star-rating options, the responses, as research has shown, tend to cluster in the one-star and five-star endpoints — serving as a de facto thumbs up or

**The film streaming site has ditched star ratings. But its solution is clumsy.**

down. (This was one reason YouTube also ditched its stars in favor of thumbs.) The thumb, as anyone who has seen “Gladiator” knows, is certainly a powerful,

clear signal — though, interestingly, there is some scholarly argument that thumbs up signaled the end for a vanquished gladiator. Roman audiences knew what they liked.

Of course, it is hard to resist the notion that Netflix’s decision represents some kind of dumbing down.

Recently, in a bathroom at Frankfurt Airport, I came across a sign that asked: “Satisfied with the cleanliness of this restroom today?” Below were three buttons: a green happy face, a yellow neutral face and a red sad face. This simple interface seemed appropriate to the task; I am sure the airport management did not require a more detailed analysis from me of its restroom hygiene (“While I appreciated the level of polish on the tiles, I felt the hand dryer could have been slightly warmer”).



# Politicization of the courts



David Leonhardt

Mainstream news coverage has a hard time making subtle distinctions between the behavior of the two political parties. When Democratic and Republican tactics are blatantly different — on voter suppression, for instance — journalists are often comfortable saying so. And when the parties act similarly — both soliciting large donors, say — journalists are good at producing “both sides do it” stories.

But when reality falls somewhere in between, the media often fails to get the story right. Journalists know how to do 50-50 stories and all-or-nothing stories. More nuanced situations create problems.

The 2016 campaign was a classic example. Hillary Clinton deserved scrutiny for her buckraking speeches and inappropriate email use. Yet her sins paled compared with Donald Trump’s lies, secrecy, bigotry, conflicts of interest, Russian ties and sexual molestation. The collective media coverage failed to make this distinction and created a false impression.

Now the pattern is repeating itself, in the battle over the federal courts.

Democrats are on the verge of filibustering Neil Gorsuch’s Supreme Court nomination. If they do, Mitch McConnell, the Republican Senate leader, has signaled that he will change the rules and bypass the filibuster. The move may change the nominating process for years to come.

Much of the media coverage has described the situation as the culmination of a partisan arms race: *Both sides do it*. And that description is not exactly wrong. Democrats have engaged in some nasty judicial tactics over the years.

Most famously, they blocked the

highly qualified, and extremely conservative, Robert Bork from joining the Supreme Court in 1987. Democrats also blocked a few qualified George W. Bush nominees to lower courts, like Miguel Estrada and Peter Keisler.

But if judicial politics isn’t an all-or-nothing story, it’s also not a 50-50 story. Too much of the discussion about Gorsuch’s nomination misses this point.

Anecdotes aside, Republicans have taken a much more aggressive, politicized approach to the courts than Democrats. The evidence:

**REPUBLICANS HAVE BEEN BOLDER ABOUT BLOCKING DEMOCRATIC NOMINEES THAN VICE VERSA.**

The failure rate of Democratic nominees to federal trial courts since 1981 has been almost twice as high as the Republican failure rate: 14 percent versus 7 percent. There is also a gap among appeals court nominees: 23 percent to 19 percent.

**Hint: Voting to confirm Neil Gorsuch won’t end it.**

nominees in 2013, allowing Barack Obama finally to fill more judgeships. Even so, Trump has inherited a huge number of vacancies.

The numbers above (which I put together thanks to Russell Wheeler of the Brookings Institution) apply only to two-term presidents, to keep comparisons consistent. But the sole recent one-term president makes the point, too: In 1990, a Democratic Congress created dozens of new judgeships, even though George H. W. Bush could then fill many.

Can you imagine Republicans expanding the judiciary for a Democratic president?

**REPUBLICAN NOMINEES HAVE BEEN LESS CENTRIST THAN DEMOCRATIC NOMINEES.**

Republican activists have built a strongly conservative network of judicial candidates. Democratic candidates are more idiosyncratic. Some are more sympathetic to prosecutors, others to

the defense. Some are more pro-business than others.

No wonder, then, that Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia are among the most conservative justices ever, according to research by Lee Epstein of Washington University. By contrast, every Democratic-nominated justice of the last 50 years has been closer to the center.

**MERRICK GARLAND, MERRICK GARLAND, MERRICK GARLAND.**

The Republicans’ strategy has been straightforward. They have tried to deny Democratic presidents a chunk of judgeships, hoping the nominations will roll over. Then Republicans have made sure their nominees are very conservative.

The strategy reached its apex last year, when the Senate blocked Obama from filling a Supreme Court vacancy, even with the highly qualified, and notably moderate, Garland. It was unprecedented. Republicans set out to flip a seat and succeeded. Now the Senate is preparing to confirm Gorsuch, likely to be another historically conservative justice.

Republicans are bragging a lot about Gorsuch’s qualifications, which are legitimate. But this debate isn’t really about qualifications. If it were, Gorsuch wouldn’t have been nominated, because Garland would be on the court.

What can Democrats, and anyone else who laments legal politicization, do about it? Absorb the lessons of game theory. Republicans have benefited from their partisan approach. They won’t stop just because Democrats ask nicely and submit to Gorsuch.

Democrats are right to force McConnell to be the one who takes the partisan step of eliminating the Supreme Court filibuster. Likewise, Democrats should be aggressive in blocking Trump nominees to lower courts.

Paeans to bipartisanship may sound good, but in this case they don’t ultimately promote bipartisanship. Right now, the status quo is working quite well for one of the two parties. The country won’t return to a less politicized judiciary until both parties have reason to want it.

## From Readers

**REGARDING FRENCH ‘LIBERTÉ’**  
Re “Whatever Happened to France’s Famed ‘Liberté’?” (Opinion, March 31):

I tend to agree that the normalization of the state of emergency in France has been surprisingly frictionless. It is, after all, not like French people to stay in and privately harbor their disagreement about something — especially when it comes to a favorite theme: societal decline.

And they haven’t lost their mojo either; the labor law certainly mobilized people to get out, shout, strike, draft clever chants and break stuff. But it’s just false to suggest that it “hasn’t provoked an outcry,” and downright absurd to state that the prospect of Marine Le Pen in the Elysée “does not seem to worry anyone.”

Ms. Le Pen may have the support of a quarter or as much as a third of France, but it is common knowledge that she repulses the rest. If one were to play a game of word association with most French people, the top match with “Marine” would most likely be “facho” (fascist). Like you-know-who, her support is troublingly high, but there is no lack of resistance.

So yes, France is currently living with a bizarre ambivalence wherein “liberté” and Dick Cheney have to share a bunk bed. But no, you are not the first to point this out. Plenty of us are very, very concerned.

**George Overton,**  
Saint Ouen, France

## CORRECTION

An Op-Ed essay on March 27 by Jessica Shattuck about her Nazi grandmother inaccurately described an aspect of life in Nazi Germany. Nazi Party membership was voluntary; it was not mandatory except for certain civil servants.

**SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS**  
Send a letter, with your phone number and email address, to [inytletters@nytimes.com](mailto:inytletters@nytimes.com).

## Bangladesh and its dual citizens

ANAM, FROM PAGE 1

The most sinister aspect of the law is the state’s power to annul citizenship in certain cases. The draft law states that people can be stripped of their citizenship on a variety of grounds: if they are dual citizens of Bangladesh and any country at war with Bangladesh; if they’ve expressed “disobedience towards the sovereignty or the Constitution”; or if their parents are “alien enemies.” These conditions are both ominous and vague: What does “disobedience towards the sovereignty or the Constitution” mean?

To answer this question, the government proposes to empower a group of unnamed officials (we don’t know whether they will come from the Civil Service or the army, or whether they will simply be random government appointees) to make decisions in individual cases. These officials’ decisions will be final, and no court will be able to overturn them. This confirms what can already be inferred from the language of the proposed law: that creating tiers of citizenship opens the door for the state to pick and choose which rights to confer on its subjects, making citizenship conditional and at the discretion of the state.

Ultimately, this law is not about dual citizens; it is about the assertion and consolidation of state power in determining what makes a worthy citizen and what acts will result in the denial, or annulment, of citizenship.

There is a deep irony here. The Bangladeshi state wants to restrict the rights of those who are already citizens and place limits on those who can claim citizenship in the future. But this belies a basic fact, which is that many millions of us have left our country of birth for economic, social and political reasons. We have knocked on the doors of other countries; we have married and had children in distant

lands; we have worked as peacekeepers, builders, housemaids and cabdrivers. We have been the refugees and the immigrants.

There are thought to be about 1.5 million Bangladeshi émigrés like me. The remittances many of them send home are worth more than \$15 billion (by World Bank figures for 2015); that is nearly 8 percent of Bangladesh’s economy. They do not expect gratitude from the government, just their natural rights.

Bangladesh’s government should make a frank admission that a country that gives its citizens limited opportunities to thrive will have a large exodus of its population. The response shouldn’t be to punish dual citizens or to create different tiers of citizenship, but to try to harness the power of this migration; to buttress, rather than stifle, what the historian and writer Benedict Anderson called the “deep horizontal comradeship” that comes with citizenship. I don’t know a single Bangladeshi abroad who doesn’t yearn, in one form or another, for home.

In 2010, I married an American. The year after that, I became a British citizen, in a ceremony in Camden Town Hall in London. Our children were born in hospitals in East London. With their British passports, perhaps *they* will never have to stand in line for a visa or feel that gnawing anxiety when approaching an immigration desk. Yet I still want them to have those green passports, if only so that I can remind them that their identities are multiple, that they have a claim to a country that was earned by the generations that came before them. I hope sincerely that the Bangladesh government does not deny me that.

**TAHMIMA ANAM** is the author, most recently, of the novel “*The Bones of Grace*.”

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# SCIENCE



ARIANA DREISLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Cliff Kapono at Black's Beach, a popular surf spot in La Jolla, Calif. A biochemist, he studies how exposure to the ocean affects microbes in the human body.

## Does the sea make us sick?

LA JOLLA, CALIF.

### Researchers are surveying surfers in a search for antibiotic-resistant genes

BY PETER ANDREY SMITH

On a recent trip, Cliff Kapono hit some of the more popular surf breaks in Ireland, England and Morocco. He's proudly Native Hawaiian and no stranger to the hunt for the perfect wave. But this time he was chasing something even more unusual: microbial swabs from fellow surfers.

Mr. Kapono, a 29-year-old biochemist earning his doctorate at the University of California, San Diego, heads up the Surfer Biome Project, an effort to determine whether routine exposure to the ocean alters the microbial communities of the body and whether those alterations might have consequences for surfers — and for the rest of us.

Mr. Kapono has collected more than 500 samples by rubbing cotton-tipped swabs over the heads, mouths, navels and other parts of surfers' bodies, as well as their boards. Volunteers also donate a fecal sample.

He uses mass spectrometry to create high-resolution maps of the chemical metabolites found in each sample. "We have the ability to see the molecular world, whether it's bacteria or a fungus or the chemical molecules," he said.

Then, working in collaboration with U.C.S.D.'s Center for Microbiome Innovation — a quick jaunt across the quad from his lab — Mr. Kapono and his colleagues sequence and map the microbes found on this unusually amphibious demographic.

He and his colleagues are looking for signs of antibiotic-resistant organisms. Part of their aim is to determine

whether, and to what extent, the ocean spreads the genes for resistance.

Many antibiotics used today derive from chemicals produced by microbes to defend themselves or to attack other micro-organisms. No surprise, then, that strains of competing bacteria have also evolved the genetic means to shrug off these chemicals.

While drug resistance comes about because of antibiotic overuse, the genes responsible for creating resistance are widely disseminated in nature and have been evolving in microbes for eons. Startlingly, that means genes giving rise to drug resistance can be found in places untouched by modern antibiotics.

Several years ago, researchers identified antibiotic-resistant genes in a sample of ancient permafrost from Nunavut, in the Canadian Arctic. William Hanage, an epidemiologist at the Harvard School of Public Health, was among those showing that these genes conferred a resistance to amikacin, a semi-synthetic drug that did not exist before the 1970s.

"There was a gene that encoded resistance to it in something that was alive 6,000 years ago," he said in an interview.

Another group led by Hazel Barton, a microbiologist at the University of Akron, discovered microorganisms harboring antibiotic-resistance genes in the Lechuguilla Cave in New Mexico. These bacteria, called *Paenibacillus* sp. LC231, have been isolated from Earth's surface for four million years, yet testing showed they were capable of fending off 26 of 40 modern antibiotics.

Sixty different resistance genes were found in bacteria carried by the Yanomami, an indigenous group in the Amazon thought to have been isolated until researchers contacted them in 2009. Resistance has also been identified in mummified human remains from Peru dating to the 11th century.

These genes are not just pervasive in nature — they are also being passed around in unexpected ways. An abun-

dance of resistance genes has been found in bacteria floating in Beijing's smog. A survey of developing countries identified chicken coops and urban wastewater treatment facilities as potential "hot spots" for the swapping of resistance genes.

The ocean, home to an incredible diversity of dissolved chemistry, also acts as a reservoir for these genes, and researchers are trying to figure out if they move from the seas into the human population. So who better to study than surfers?

"A lot of the research of the transmission of resistant bacteria has focused on the role of the health care environment," said Anne Leonard, an environmental epidemiologist at the University of Exeter who is investigating whether surfers have higher rates of bacterial colonization. "What's less well studied is the role that natural environments play"

By some estimates, surfers can swallow about 170 milliliters, or five and

**A gene "in something that was alive 6,000 years ago" encoded resistance to one semi-synthetic drug.**

three-quarters ounces, of seawater per session. Dr. Leonard and William Gaze, of the European Center for Environment and Human Health, and his colleagues have estimated that recreational swimmers and surfers in England and Wales may be exposed to resistant strains of *E. coli* in the ocean on more than six million occasions each year.

Because bacteria readily pick up and pass on genetic information across species, researchers suspect the risks of acquiring resistant genes are higher in places that facilitate direct transfer with microbes inhabiting the body. Coastal waters polluted with sewage, in this

view, are probably more worrisome than smog or deep caves.

At the moment, no one is sure whether it is actually possible for people to pick up these microbial genes from a long day at the beach. In the lab, however, Mr. Kapono has found evidence for the transfer of resistance genes from bacteria in the ocean into strains associated with the human gut when they are placed in proximity.

Evolutionary pressures favored the emergence of resistant genes. Microbes are drawing upon this natural bank of resistance today to fend off the best drugs devised by humans.

"These antibiotic resistance genes did not arise in order to make our lives awkward," Dr. Hanage said. "They have completely different functions that only have recently been repurposed."

"These things are everywhere," he added. "If we want to stop them from moving into pathogens that are killing us, we need to understand where they are."

Back in California, Mr. Kapono has begun analyzing the data from his quest. So far, neither he nor his collaborators have found evidence that swimmers or surfers are picking up antibiotic-resistant infections from the ocean.

But Mr. Kapono noticed in his preliminary data that certain metabolites from his body came to resemble those of other local surfers as he moved from region to region. That could be a result of commonalities in diet or lifestyle — or it could be evidence that immersing our bodies in saline, microbe-rich environments has a detectable biochemical impact.

Mr. Kapono has taken samples from surfers in California and Hawaii; surfers in the South Pacific are next. He is mulling a trip to Chile to conduct field work at Punta de Lobos. The rural location may yield some unique microbes.

It's also known for something else: left-hand point breaks.

## Political campaign for global health job

GLOBAL HEALTH

### Three seeking election as director general of W.H.O. at critical time

BY DONALD G. MCNEIL JR.

In May, the World Health Organization will select a new director general, a choice that will affect the health of hundreds of millions in the developing world — perhaps even more if a global pandemic emerges.

For the first time, the selection will be made by a vote of the W.H.O.'s member nations for candidates who have campaigned openly for the post. The changes are intended to introduce some transparency into the process. Until now the job, held by Dr. Margaret Chan since 2006, has been filled after quiet horse-trading among major nations, sometimes involving accusations of bribery.

The three candidates are Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, 52, a malaria expert and former Ethiopian health minister; Dr. David Nabarro, 67, a Briton who has led the United Nations response to various disease outbreaks; and Dr. Sania Nishtar, 54, a cardiologist and, briefly, a Pakistani government minister who is an expert in obesity and heart disease.

The election comes at pivotal moment for the W.H.O. The organization that the candidates hope to lead has reached a crossroads, and many experts believe it suffers from a crippling identity crisis.

Critics often dismiss it as another lumbering United Nations agency paying tax-free salaries to technocrats to live in Switzerland and churn out reports. At times, the agency lives up to the stereotype: Media officers have been known to plead that they cannot

find an expert to take a brief phone call "because it's dinnertime here in Geneva."

But as soon as an epidemic like Ebola or Zika strikes, the world expects the W.H.O. somehow to launch a corps of medical paratroopers, storming ashore in West Africa or Brazil to save the citizenry from another plague.

In fact, there is no battalion of jungle-hardened doctors polishing syringes in Geneva. The budget for that small division was cut after the 2008 fiscal crisis.

Instead, the agency has come to rely on medical charities like Doctors Without Borders to respond first to crises, while officials appeal to donor nations to contribute money and doctors.

Its annual budget is only \$2.2 billion — half that of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. Only 30 percent comes from United Nations dues; the rest is donated.

The biggest donors, like the United States, Britain, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary International and Norway, often give money with strings attached. Eradicating polio, for example, consumes much of the agency's time, even as donors press officials to open new fronts against obesity and mental illness.

Tasks that once belonged to the W.H.O. have been wrested away. For example, although it oversees emergency vaccine stockpiles for yellow fever and cholera, other agencies now oversee childhood vaccines.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is now the main conduit for fighting those diseases — and has \$5 billion a year to work with.

Nonetheless, the W.H.O. remains essential, especially in crises. Only this agency can declare a global health emergency. And while countries often resist revealing disease outbreaks for fear they will hurt tourism, food exports or national pride, they are obliged as United Nations members to report to the W.H.O.

The election will work on the principle of one country one vote — Liechtenstein will have as much say as China. It will be by secret ballot, so if deals are cut during a runoff, it will be hard to tell who switched sides.

Virtually all global health experts interviewed about the candidates spoke on condition of anonymity, for fear of alienating the future winner. Privately, several predicted a runoff between Dr. Nabarro and Dr. Tedros; the outcome will depend on which way nations in the Americas, East Asia and parts of Europe swing.

Dr. Nabarro is well-known to the big donor nations. Dr. Tedros has the endorsement of the 55-member African Union, but is hurt by Ethiopia's dismal human rights record. Dr. Nishtar's support is uncertain.

On most issues, the candidates' positions are similar. All favor more transparency and efficiency. All want a bigger W.H.O. budget that they control, and all fear the Trump administration will cut donations.

All want to restore the agency's pandemic response capabilities. All believe drugs and vaccines should be cheaper. All want more focus on global warming and human health.

But in interviews with The New York Times and in public forums, the candidates have dodged some fundamental questions. None will say what they will cut from the agency's strained budget. None will name any countries, foundations or corporations they think have too much influence.

Lawrence O. Gostin, director of the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University, said, "This is a deeply political election where merit often comes second to regional politics."



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP—GETTY IMAGES

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus



Sania Nishtar



David Nabarro

## Sierra snow to the rescue in California drought

MAMMOTH LAKES, CALIF.

BY MIKE MCPHATE, DEREK WATKINS AND JIM WILSON

The majestic beauty of California's Sierra Nevada never fails to impress. But the mountain range, which stretches hundreds of miles, is much more than a stunning vista: It makes living in this arid state possible.

One of California's most important water supplies is melted snow. Each spring and summer, the Sierra sends runoff down its slopes that recharges rivers and reservoirs, allowing crops to be irrigated and drinking glasses to be filled.

Knowing with precision how much snow has accumulated over the winter is crucial for farmers and water managers. That's why a high-tech mapping project at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the Airborne Snow Observatory, has become so important.

Using measurements gathered by specialized instruments on a plane over the central Sierra, scientists have been able to gain an unprecedented understanding of the amount of water present in the snow. This year, after a very wet winter, the totals have been remarkable.

Using the NASA data, we compared this year's snowpack with that of 2015, when the state was in the grip of drought. You can find our interactive

maps at [nytimes.com/science](http://nytimes.com/science).

High in the mountains, the data show, the snow blankets the ground in layers tens of feet deep in many places. In 2015, almost no part of the Sierra had snow that thick.

At the lower elevations around the Hetch Hetchy reservoir, which collects most of the melting snow runoff and supplies water to millions, there was almost no snow to speak of in 2015.

This year, the snowpack crept within a few hundred feet of the reservoir's edge.

Parts of the Tuolumne Basin in late February were blanketed with 1.2 million acre-feet of snow-water equivalent — the amount of water that would result if the snow were instantly melted. That's about 10 times the amount observed in 2015, said Thomas Painter, a snow hydrologist at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory/California Institute of Technology, who leads the NASA program.

He added, "And it keeps on coming."

The pattern has held for the central Sierra region as a whole. NASA's airborne observatory has been detecting snow depths in the mountains ranging from a few feet at lower elevations to more than 70 feet in avalanche areas.

"Some of the snowdrifts have faces of 25 to 40 feet," said Jeffrey Payne, a water resources manager at the Friant Water Authority who has analyzed the NASA data. "So we've got some pretty serious snow."



JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Snowdrifts in the Sierra Nevada are 25 to 40 feet tall. Ski resorts have been making plans to extend their seasons.



# Sports

## For U.N.C., last year’s failure led to this year’s title

ON COLLEGE BASKETBALL  
GLENDALE, ARIZ.

BY MARC TRACY

In Monday night’s sluggish slog of a national title game — it was trench warfare, with whistles instead of land mines — North Carolina faced the frustrating situation of clearly outplaying its opponent, Gonzaga, without the scoreboard’s reflecting that fact.

The Tar Heels (33-7) relinquished a lead less than five minutes into the first half and did not get it back until the start of the second. They promptly lost the lead again, going more than four minutes without scoring. A team that entered the game making more than 36 percent of its 3-pointers sank them at less than half that rate. The team’s heart and soul, Kennedy Meeks, amassed four fouls. It reclaimed a four-point lead with more than six minutes left, its biggest to that point, and not a minute later, Gonzaga (37-2) was back up by one.

Many teams might have crumbled. But, like Russian novels, the N.C.A.A. tournament rewards suffering. And suffering — suffering, this team knew. Ten U.N.C. players, including the starting five, were on last year’s team, which lost the title game to Villanova on a body-blow buzzer-beater by Kris Jenkins, the adoptive brother of U.N.C.’s own Nate Britt. Jenkins sat directly behind the U.N.C. bench like some metaphysical reminder of how painful it can be to get so close to glory and falter.

Up 62-60 with a little more than three minutes left, U.N.C. huddled during a timeout. Steve Robinson, who has been an assistant to Tar Heels Coach Roy Williams both at Kansas and at U.N.C., brought up last year’s finale with the players.

“Remember that moment, and how we felt last year,” Robinson said, according to point guard Joel Berry II. “And we don’t want that again. So we’ve just got to give it our all.”

“And that’s the moment where we locked in,” Berry added, supplying his own narration. “And we went out there and just gave it our all, literally.”

After Gonzaga went ahead 65-63 with less than two minutes left, the Bulldogs — the little program that truly could, a small school in eastern Washington



North Carolina forward Theo Pinson dunking in front of Gonzaga center Przemek Karnowski during the N.C.A.A. championship game. North Carolina won, 71-65.

State that built itself into a national power and was validated with its first appearance in the Final Four — never scored again. U.N.C. finished the game on an 8-0 run to make the final score 71-65 and bring the program’s sixth national title back to Chapel Hill.

Previous defeat leading to present triumph was a common theme throughout this tournament. There was Zak Showalter, the Wisconsin redshirt senior, for instance. Last month in Buffalo, N.Y., in the tournament’s second round, the eighth-seeded Badgers — led by a core of seniors who remembered barely losing the 2014 national semifinal to Ken-

tucky and then barely losing the 2015 national title game to Duke — put the kibosh on top overall seed Villanova’s season with a 65-62 upset.

“In March, there aren’t really going to be blowouts to win games,” Showalter said. “It’s going to be who makes the plays in the last five, 10 minutes of games.”

A week later, there was Tyler Dorsey, the Oregon sophomore. In the regional finals last year, the Ducks, elated after beating Duke, the defending champion at the time, were knocked off by an underdog, Oklahoma. Dorsey and his team did not forget, and in this year’s regional

final, in the hostile territory of Kansas City, Mo., they upset top-seeded Kansas.

“That experience definitely helps — that we got back to this point,” Dorsey said. “We knew what we needed to do.”

And here was Theo Pinson, the U.N.C. junior who has made himself M.V.P. — Most Valuable to the Press — and foreshadowed Monday the day before, describing how the Tar Heels respond to on-court adversity.

“We’ve been here before,” Pinson said. “We say that a lot during games: ‘We’ve been through these situations before.’”

In college basketball, as a Nobel

Prize-winning poet once almost put it: There is no path to success like failure, even if failure itself is no success at all.

If that holds any sway, it may constitute commentary on the team-building strategy of loading up on one-and-dones — players bound for the N.B.A. after their freshman seasons. Such teams have the advantage of the most purely talented players but the drawback of a lack of experience — in a sport where winning in March might require losing in past Marches.

There have now been 11 seasons of what might be termed the one-and-done era — since the N.B.A. began to require

its draftees to be at least one year removed from high school — and it is generally agreed that just two teams, Kentucky in 2012 and Duke in 2015, won national titles primarily because of such players.

Monday’s contenders combined for, at most, one one-and-done player (Gonzaga big man Zach Collins, whose five fouls limited him to just 14 minutes). Williams has been ineffective at recruiting such players, partly because a protracted N.C.A.A. investigation into fake classes disproportionately taken by major-sport athletes has left a cloud over the program.

But a perhaps unforeseen advantage of this recruiting obstacle is that U.N.C. has “been able to stay old,” in the words of Seth Greenberg, the former Virginia Tech coach who is now an ESPN commentator.

**Like Russian novels, the N.C.A.A. tournament rewards suffering. And suffering — suffering, North Carolina knew.**

“I’ve always been a believer,” Greenberg continued, going on to refer to two veterans on otherwise young teams, “that one-and-done can win with that guy who can basically coach your freshmen and locker room — Darius Miller in 2012, Quinn Cook in 2015.”

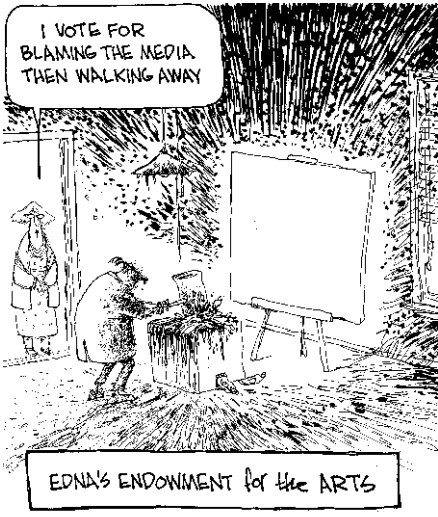
“It’s hard for those young players to understand how it works,” he added.

There were several huge plays that confirmed the victory for the Tar Heels, but perhaps the most impressive came with 16 seconds left and a three-point lead. Meeks, a senior, carrying four fouls, rose up and blocked an attempted floater by Nigel Williams-Goss, Gonzaga’s leading scorer this season. The block fell to Berry, a junior, who chucked it up the court to Justin Jackson, a junior, who stuffed the ball home to create a five-point lead with 12 seconds left.

After the game, Nakhia Meeks, the mother of Kennedy Meeks, said she never doubted her son or his team.

“My question is, Did we know we were going to win it this year?” she said. “Yes! I prayed on it, and I called it last year. I knew our boys wanted it more than anything.”

### NON SEQUITUR



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### SUDOKU

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								2
	6		5					
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3					2			

Fill the grid so that every row, column 3x3 box and shaded 3x3 box contains each of the numbers 1 to 9 exactly once.

**Solution**

4	6	1	3	8	2	9	5	7
3	8	7	6	5	9	1	4	2
9	5	2	4	1	7	6	3	8
6	3	9	1	7	5	2	8	4
2	7	5	8	6	4	3	1	9
1	4	8	2	9	3	7	6	5
8	9	6	7	4	1	5	2	3
7	1	3	5	2	8	4	9	6
5	2	4	9	3	6	8	7	1

For solving tips and more puzzles: [www.nytimes.com/sudoku](http://www.nytimes.com/sudoku)

### JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SULYO

GNBOO

DLIDEF

FROLLA

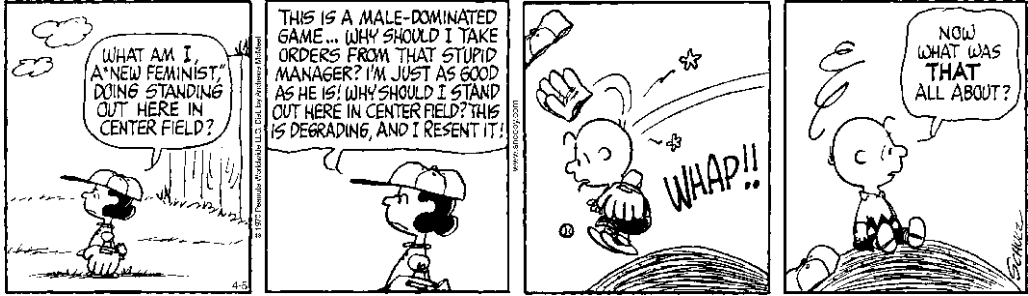
THE 'B-HOLE' COURSE WOULD BE Laid OUT IN A CIRCLE MAKING IT PERFECT FOR ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: AWAKE DRESS UNFOLD FURNING  
Answer: After realizing that they'd received only bulls, the new dairy farm was an — UDDER! FAILURE

### PEANUTS



### GARFIELD



### WIZARD of ID



### KENKEN

1-	2÷		1-
	24x	3-	
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		2-	

Fill the grids with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

For solving tips and more KenKen puzzles: [www.nytimes.com/kenken](http://www.nytimes.com/kenken). For Feedback: [nytimes@kenken.com](mailto:nytimes@kenken.com)

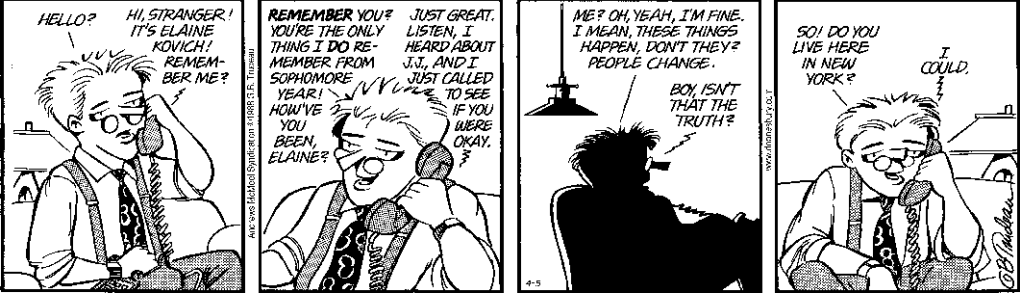
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### Answers to Previous Puzzles

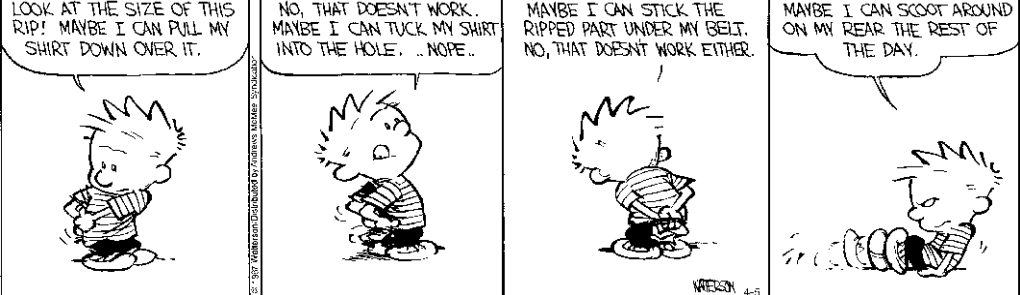
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1	4	2	3
2	1	3	4

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4	2	5	6	1	3
3	1	4	5	6	2
5	4	1	2	3	6
6	5	2	3	4	1

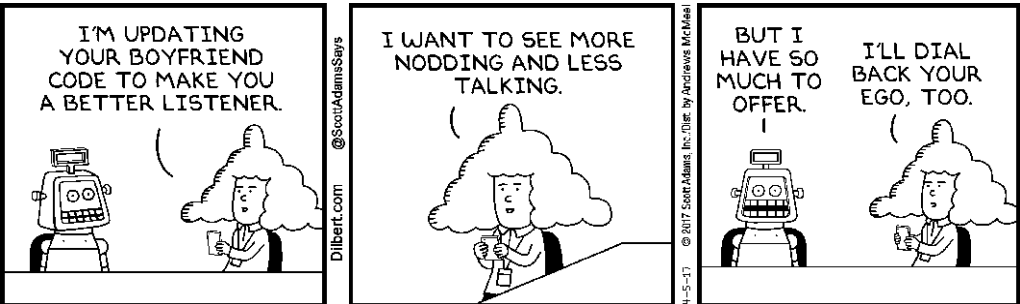
### DOONESBURY CLASSIC 1988



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### DILBERT



### CROSSWORD | Edited by Will Shortz

- Across**

1 Rod at a pig roast

5 Vehicles with medallions

9 Partner of circumstance

13 Result of a sock in the eye

15 Colorful, warm-blooded fish

16 Cowboy boot accessory

17 Tomorrow, in 43-Down

18 Mexican president Enrique

20 Pavlov with a Nobel

21 Biceps and hamstrings

23 “Buy It \_\_\_” (eBay option)

24 Word after motion or lie

26 “Puh-lease!”

28 Persona \_\_\_ (welcome guest)
- 29 1987-94 “Star Trek” series, briefly

31 Eyes, to bards

32 Pothook shape

33 Count in music

35 Lowest-voiced choir members

37 Drink often served with a miniature umbrella

39 Vehement rejection

42 Prefix with violet or violent

43 Mo. when the N.F.L. season starts

46 Gave the go-ahead

47 Outfield-patching need

48 Cola wars competitor

50 Naps south of the border

54 Devices that prevent fumes from escaping

### Solution to April 4 Puzzle

X	F	L	G	R	A	T	E	S	T	A	I	D
E	R	A	R	E	L	A	S	E	C	O	S	M
N	O	S	E	R	V	I	C	E	R	A	Y	O
O	D	E	A	O	B	I	P	E	S	O		
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J	A	P	E	S	P	I	N	O	C	H	I	O
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### PUZZLE BY ALEX EATON-SALNERS

- 13 Tiny bit

14 Log craft

19 “Crypto City” at Ft. Meade

22 “\_\_\_ luck!”

25 Log construction

27 Parks of the civil rights movement

30 Rock scientists

34 Year, in 43-Down

35 “Cheers” setting

36 Change with the times
- 37 Okra units

38 Forrest Gump’s C.O.

39 Profile-altering plastic surgery

40 Pacific battle site of 1945

41 Parts of hypodermics

43 Language that utilizes the letter “ñ”

44 43-Down, in 43-Down

45 One of the eight in a V-8
- 49 Greek poet who wrote “The Distaff”

51 Message left on a hotline, perhaps

52 Northeast Corridor express train

53 Mister, in 43-Down

55 Ooze

58 “Wow!,” in Internet-speak

61 Set, as a price

63 Tupperware topper



# Culture

## Sugar, spice and all nice

JoJo Siwa, a YouTube star at 13, takes on mean girls, but not everyone approves

BY HAYLEY KRISCHER

Thirteen-year-old JoJo Siwa rolled up to school in a souped-up vintage car with a giant pink bow plastered on the grill. Inside the car, with her blond hair tightly pulled into a side ponytail and wrapped in a pastel yellow bow, she sang to her mother, “I don’t really care about what they say,” while a group of mean girls wearing not-so-pastel clothes snickered from a bench. (We know they’re mean girls because the words “mean girls” are displayed on the screen next to them.)

“Don’t let the haters get their way,” JoJo’s mother, also clad in yellow pastel, told her.

No worries. The new young teenage heroine of suburban America showed no fear. After winning a rowdy dance battle in her video “Boomerang,” which has had more than 200 million views on YouTube, JoJo places a purple bow on the lead mean girl. Everyone becomes best friends.

Unlike the red, oversize scrunchie Heather Chandler wore in “Heathers,” which was a symbol of power and authoritarianism, the bow worn by JoJo is a symbol of confidence: believing in yourself and, more important, being nice to others.

Thirteen-year-old girls aren’t generally known for their oversize bows these days, but JoJo isn’t your typical teenager. She just signed a multiplatform deal with Nickelodeon, which includes consumer products, original programming, social media, live events and music.

Since June, JoJo’s Bows — made by H.E.R. Accessories, a licensee of JoJo’s — have been among the top sellers at Claire’s, the store popular among the middle-school set, according to Hind Palmer, Claire’s global brand marketing and public relations director.

“I can’t believe it’s a hair bow that’s doing this,” said Jennifer Roth Saad, the creative director of H.E.R. “I’ve never seen something like this.”

JoJo said in a phone interview that



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN HENRIKSEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JoJo Siwa, with millions of YouTube views to her credit, just signed a multiplatform deal with Nickelodeon, which includes consumer products, original programming, social media, live events and music.

she had worn a side ponytail with a bow since she was 4, and she has worn it through most of her career, which includes stunts on “Abby’s Ultimate Dance Competition” and “Dance Moms.” But recently, she has become well known to

her 2.7 million YouTube subscribers for wearing a bow and being goofy by showing videos of her sick in bed, getting ready in the morning and playing pranks on another YouTube star. “I’m 13, and I like being 13,” said JoJo,

who divides her time between Omaha and Los Angeles. “A lot of people my age try to act 16. But just be your age. There’s always time to grow older. You can never grow younger.”

Indeed.

In Britain, where JoJo’s bows are even more successful than they are in the United States, the head teacher of a school in Bury banned the bows because they were distracting, while another school, in Long Eaton, permitted the bows as long as they conformed to dress code colors.

Shauna Pomerantz, a sociology professor at Brock University in Ontario and an author of “Smart Girls: Success, School and the Myth of Post-Feminism,” said school administrators had historically policed girls for wearing skirts that were too short or having exposed bra straps, not for an accessory reminiscent of the 1950s. “JoJo stands for being nice,” she said. “And the bow is a representation of JoJo. Ultimately the goal of that video is to suggest that meanness isn’t cool, and niceness is cool.”

In a world where parents of children ages 8 to 14 have long been concerned about hypersexualized clothing, early puberty and overly sophisticated media messages, JoJo is part of a growing group of girls documenting routine, age-appropriate behaviors and activities such as being nice, doing their chores, divulging what’s in their backpacks, making dresses out of garbage bags and working to pay for their own clothes.

The 12-year-old competitive gymnast Annie LeBlanc, a.k.a. Acroanna, has had a YouTube channel since she was 3. On her channel, which has been viewed a combined 174 million times, Annie documents herself making slime blindfolded and investigates what’s in her purse. But mostly she appears on her family’s channel, Bratayley, where 3.9 million subscribers follow her, her parents and her 8-year-old sister, Hayley (who also has her own channel), as well as archival footage of her brother Caleb, who died two years ago at age 13 of a heart condition. There are Bratayley sponsorship deals, Bratayley merchandise and a more recent invitation for Annie to participate in Nike’s Young Athletes program, which, naturally, was documented on Bratayley.

Many popular videos made by girls in the pre- and early teenage years live on nine connected YouTube channels. Seven Super Girls, the most successful of these channels, has over six million subscribers, and its videos have been viewed a combined 6.9 billion times. Each channel — others are called Seven Cool Tweens, Seven Awesome Kids and Seven Twinkling Tweens — is run with more efficiency than some professional media sites: Each girl is responsible for making a video on a specific day of the week. (Annie was on Seven Awesome Kids from 2010 to 2011.) They follow a set of guidelines that include weekly themes and preclude them from giving their surnames and location.

The SAKs channels, as they are known, were started in 2008 by seven families in Britain who, in the early days of YouTube, wanted to make sure their children were making family-appropriate content. The only remaining parent of that original partnership is Ian Rylett, who is currently in charge of the SAKs operation.

Mr. Rylett, who lives in Leeds, said



producing the channels was essentially his full-time job. He and a team of six others take care of copyright issues, create sponsorship deals, come up with weekly themes, monitor the channels and arrange meet and greets. The tickets for a 1,000-seat event that is coming up in Orlando, Fla., are selling for \$30 each.

Mr. Rylett receives an income from the channels, as do some of the girls. The girls own their own content, he said, but they have not signed contracts.

**“Just be your age. There’s always time to grow older.”**

Alexis, a 12-year-old from Southern California whose parents wanted her surname withheld for privacy reasons, has made close to 200 videos for Seven Cool Tweens and Seven Awesome Kids over the past three years. Alexis wears her reddish-brown hair in a braid, no makeup and braces. Her bedroom isn’t catalog perfect. Her most popular videos revolve around silly antics like pranking family members (which received 23.2 million views), making a mess of herself and her outfit before the school dance and getting grounded for life. The appeal? “Kids want to watch kids,” Alexis said in a phone interview.

Emily (a screen name), 12, of Seven Awesome Kids is home-schooled in Southern California. Some of her most popular videos — she writes and edits them herself over two days — include walking through a mysterious forest and finding an angel potion. “She’s a little Stanley Kubrick, controlling every-

thing,” said her father, Tim Gould.

While Alexis has received money from the SAKs channel (though she has not been involved in sponsorship deals), Emily has not received money, their parents said.


“They’re free to leave whenever they want,” Mr. Rylett said. “They can take their content with them. When they do get older, it is quite common for them to look back and say, ‘Eww.’ ”

The parents seemed ambivalent about the arrangement — knowing that allowing their children to have an online identity comes with risks of harassment or worse — but they don’t want to stop their daughters from dreaming of becoming a director or an editor or a writer. Or a television star.

Yet this YouTube activity, even depicting wholesome activities, is disconcerting for Emily Long, the director of communications and development at the Lamp, a media-based literary group. “It’s troublesome to me when I see this being celebrated as the herald of what our young girls should aspire to,” Ms. Long said. “That you, too, can go from being a YouTube star to having your own deal on Nickelodeon.”

She would like to see girls being recognized for more thoughtful content, she said, such as that of Marley Dias, 12, who started the #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign last year after recognizing a scarcity of black-girl protagonists.

“If I had a 13-year-old,” Ms. Long said, “I would push her toward someone like Marley Dias instead of JoJo. But Marley Dias doesn’t sell giant hair bows. Marley Dias sells social justice and social causes and writing and nerd culture. And there’s plenty to market there.”



CUVÉE ROSÉ  
CHOSEN BY THE BEST

CHAMPAGNE

**Laurent-Perrier**

MAISON FONDÉE  
1812




Photo credit: Iris Végère / Illustrator credit: Pierre Le-Tan

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# Best faces forward

Two Broadway stars play rivals in a new musical, but they're anything but

BY ALEXANDRA JACOBS

"You've got lovely beds. Good beds," the actress Patti LuPone said.

She was referring not to furniture, but fingernails: the unvarnished ones on the hands of her current co-star, Christine Ebersole. They contrasted markedly with Ms. LuPone's nails, which she herself had lacquered in shiny maroon, after years observing professional manicurists. "I watch how they depress the fluid," Ms. LuPone said, pantomiming bottle and brush.

"The problem is, when I put nail polish on it really weakens my nails," Ms. Ebersole said in a sisterly way. "They just flake off."

The talons were out, in other words, but this was not a catfight. More a chat 'n' chew between Tony Award-winning actresses getting the chance to share a Broadway stage for the first time in "War Paint," one of a half-dozen new musicals debuting in a mad cram before the season ends.

Dressed in a confusion of stretchy black clothing and scarves, the two women were sharing a sofa in the upper half of a sleek duplex at 663 Fifth Avenue, where the flagship of Elizabeth Arden's signature spa, the Red Door, moved five years ago from the florid former Aeolian Building two blocks north. They had refused treatments and were instead efficiently slurping vegetarian soups.

In "War Paint," which opens at the Nederlander Theater on Thursday, Ms. Ebersole, 64, plays Miss Arden, née Florence Nightingale Graham: the entrepreneur who made cosmetics, long associated with prostitutes, acceptable and desirable to the American middle and upper classes starting in the 1910s.

Ms. LuPone, 67, plays Arden's less-remembered but equally esteemed competitor, Helena Rubinstein, who imparted both artistic and clinical prestige to the pursuit of beauty, and who is credited with the phrase "there are no ugly women, only lazy ones."

Bette Davis vs. Joan Crawford; Alexis Colby vs. Krystle Carrington: Female rivalries have long meant boffo box office and Nielsen ratings points. But theatergoers hoping for Ms. Ebersole and Ms. LuPone to whack each other with pocketbooks or hurl drinks like Anne Bancroft and Shirley MacLaine in "The Turning Point" are due for disappointment.

Rather, their characters fight by issuing new products, raiding staff and investing in premium real estate: penthouses and country spreads for Rubinstein, who donated millions of dollars to arts education and other causes through her foundation; an Irish castle and Lexington, Ky., breeding stable for Arden, who was passionately devoted to horses and marched with suffragists.

"We should really look at them as role models," Ms. LuPone said of the two tycoons.

"They were really inspiring," Ms. Ebersole said.

"My God," Ms LuPone said. "Regardless of what their personal flaws were, or what drove them — nothing that they achieved for themselves and then in the name of woman has ever been matched!"

Ms. Ebersole, more gently: "They paved the way, and started before women had the vote."

Ms. LuPone was incensed by news reports about the departing C.E.O. of Yahoo, Marissa Mayer. "Her male replacement is getting twice as much as she is," she said. "Twice as much!"



Patti LuPone, left, and Christine Ebersole portray the tycoons Helena Rubinstein and Elizabeth Arden, respectively, in "War Paint."

The gender pay inequity common in the film industry is not an issue for "War Paint," which is capitalized at \$11 million and carried by its leading ladies, one or both of whom appear in all but four of the show's numbers. But the fact that its principal creators are all men might arch an eyebrow.

The musical takes its title and basic premise from a dual biography by Lindy Woodhead published in 2004 that a few years later inspired a documentary, "The Powder & the Glory," to which David Stone, a producer, was introduced by the director James Lapine. Mr. Stone has had tremendous success with "Wicked," another musical centered on female foes, and, among other projects, worked on "The Vagina Monologues" by Eve Ensler.

He called her for advice before proceeding.

"Eve said, 'This can't be about makeup.' And it's not," Mr. Stone said. "It's about women and beauty and power and how women treat each other."

Mr. Stone and Ms. LuPone both wrinkle their noses at the word "diva," a description cribbed from Italian opera that is now often applied to any commanding female presence in the entertainment industry, inevitably also suggesting an excess of temperament. "I just can't

stand it," Mr. Stone said. "Diva implies difficult." At a talk about the show a few months ago, Ms. LuPone proposed "dame" as an alternative, to approving whoops from the audience.

After securing rights to the material, Mr. Stone hired Michael Greif, with whom he had worked on "Next to Normal" and "If/Then," to direct. They brought in the composer Scott Frankel, the lyricist Michael Korie and the book writer Doug Wright, Mr. Greif's collaborators on the musical "Grey Gardens," inspired by the Maysles brothers' cult documentary about the eccentric aristocrats "Big Edie" Beale and her daughter, "Little Edie."

Some early workshops of "War Paint" featured Donna Murphy in the Arden role; but she withdrew for family reasons, and Ms. Ebersole, who had won a 2007 Tony for portraying both Beales at different stages of their lives, assumed the part.

She and Ms. LuPone, for whom this is the first musical since the short-lived "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (2010), were not shy about participating in the creative process. "Both of them were very excited to play against the obvious — feuding, larger-than-life stars and that kind of energy — and actually find ways where the com-

"Both of them were very excited to play against the obvious."

petition between them was nourishing," Mr. Frankel said a few hours before a recent preview performance.

"These women were enormously sophisticated and tasteful and well versed in corporate weaponry," Mr. Wright said. "They didn't have to reduce things to an insult; they could actually wage business warfare against one another and did so very effectively for 50 years." Anything "that felt cheap or easy," he said, the actresses "instantly rejected."

Criticism of an out-of-town tryout in Chicago last summer focused on relentless ping-ponging between its two subjects, who supposedly never met in real life. About a third of the show has been revised, the creators said, both to fortify the solo appearances and to find novel ways of bringing the characters together onstage.

"There was some tightening," Mr. Frankel said, slipping into face-cream patois. "Because it's the two of them, there's a little bit of inherent back-and-forthness that's intrinsic in the proposition of the evening, but I think we tried to find ways to mix that up in



Ms. Ebersole in a number from the new show, which opens Thursday.

more unexpected ways."

He and his colleagues were adamant that "War Paint" is not purely ladies' entertainment, though the Broadway audience is disproportionately female, a demographic that has helped make shows like "Waitress" into hits.

"There are metaphors inherent in the idea of makeup that I think transcend gender," Mr. Wright said. "It offers a potential mask where you can pretend to be someone you aren't; it offers a disguise if you don't wish to be recognized; it offers an avenue toward a certain kind of perceived self-improvement; it is a kind of lure to attract someone else."

But with its 10-odd costume changes designed by Catherine Zuber, including flying-saucer hats and piles of glittering jewelry, and makeup by Angelina Avalone, "War Paint" has been an occasion for the two stars to reflect on how cosmetics and other trappings have been integral to their long careers.

"Once I put on the wig it's like 'O.K., badda bing, badda boom,'" Ms. LuPone said. "I'm not the type of actress that goes into a corner and meditates for 20 minutes on the bones of Helena Rubinstein. Do you know what I mean?"

Ms. Ebersole said that for performers backstage as well as for many people in real life, "putting on makeup is a really great centering device. It's a way of having you focus on what you're doing. As you put on the mask, then the other things come through."

She recalled her work in the 2001 revival of "42nd Street," for which she won her first Tony, at 31. "The amount of — *her* first Tony, by Roger Kirk: "The costumes just informed everything."

This inspired Ms. LuPone to reminisce about "Evita," for which she got *her* first Tony, at 31. "The amount of — for lack of a better word — gack that we're putting on!" she said. "I also harken back to that time in 'Anything Goes' when I was in those bias-cut gowns. Oy, I can't wear a bias-cut gown now to save my life, unless I'm strapped in."

The two actresses were "babies in the city together," as Ms. LuPone put it. She arrived in 1968 to attend Juilliard, where she studied with Marian Seldes, having known she wanted to perform since she was 4, standing downstage right in a tap recital.

Ms. Ebersole, who had gone to MacMurray College in Jacksonville, Ill., before enrolling at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in 1973, had had other plans. "I was going to be a nurse," she said.

"Of course you were," Ms. LuPone

said. "Look at her!"

Instead Ms. Ebersole served customers at the Lion's Rock, a restaurant on the Upper East Side with water splashing down a four-story slab of red granite. "It's condominiums now, I think," she said.

Ms. LuPone, meanwhile, worked at a "wannabe mobster" hangout run by a man who imported cages for dancing girls in nightclubs. "My roommate was one of the dancers, and I wasn't pretty enough, tall enough or thin enough to be a dancer, so I was a waitress in a see-through lace mini-dress," she said.

Both women bemoaned a lost era when actors (and stagehands) were recognized and welcomed in the theater district at places like Jimmy Ray's and Charlie O's, and spent time after the show socializing rather than cultivating followings on Twitter and YouTube.

"I think we have fewer showmen," Ms. LuPone said. "Like the Irving Thalbergs and the Alex Cohens and the Robert Whiteheads and the people that loved the theater or loved making movies. It's such a cliché, but it's all bean counters. It's statistics. Polling."

This was a reminder that the unexpected foil in the Arden-Rubinstein showdown was Charles Revson, the founder of Revlon, rendered in "War Paint" by Erik Liberman as "a two-bit carnival barker in an Italian suit." It's a line that for some involved with the production took on new resonance after Donald J. Trump defeated Hillary Clinton.

Overnight, in their view, the musical went from celebration to cautionary tale.

After Rubinstein died in 1965, Revson bought her Park Avenue triplex. But that wasn't the final indignity. Last year, the company he founded, which had brought sex back into the midcentury cosmetics marketplace with suggestive ad copy and flashy layouts, took over Elizabeth Arden.

"Everybody's rolling over in their grave!" Ms. LuPone said.

Not that any of these brands make her particularly nostalgic. "I used to be a Georgette Klinger girl. For years," she said, after the two women packed up a gift of exfoliating face pads and descended nine floors to the lobby.

"Oh my gosh, Georgette Klinger, I completely forgot that name," Ms. Ebersole said, blinking her blue eyes on the sunny sidewalk.

"That was a salon," Ms. LuPone said. "You'd go in, and close the door, and they were all about getting into your face. They don't get into your face anymore."

# One nation, broken by catastrophe

## BOOK REVIEW

**AMERICAN WAR.** By Omar El Akkad. 333 pp. Knopf. \$26.95.

BY MICHIKO KAKUTANI

Omar El Akkad's debut novel, "American War," is an unlikely mash-up of unsparing war reporting and plot elements familiar to readers of the recent young-adult dystopian series "The Hunger Games" and "Divergent." From these incongruous ingredients, El Akkad has fashioned a surprisingly powerful novel — one that creates as haunting a postapocalyptic universe as Cormac McCarthy did in "The Road" (2006), and as devastating a look at the fallout that national events have on an American family as Philip Roth did in "The Plot Against America" (2004).

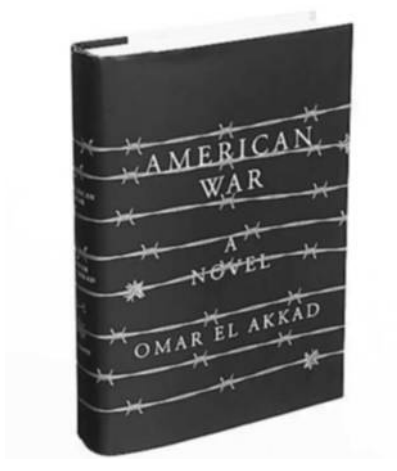
Set in the closing decades of the 21st century and the opening ones of the 22nd, El Akkad's novel recounts what happened during the Second American Civil War between the North and South and its catastrophic aftermath. It is a story that extrapolates the deep, partisan divisions that already plague American politics and looks at where those widening splits could lead. A story that maps the palpable conse-

quences for the world of accelerating climate change and an unraveling United States. A story that imagines what might happen if the terrifying realities of today's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — drone strikes, torture, suicide bombers — were to come home to America.

El Akkad — who was born in Cairo and grew up in Doha, Qatar, before moving to Canada — worked for The Globe and Mail, and reported on the war in Afghanistan, the military tribunals at Guantánamo Bay and the Arab Spring. His familiarity with the United States' war on terror informs this novel on every level, from his shattering descriptions of the torture endured by one of his main characters to his bone-deep understanding of the costs of war on civilians, who suddenly find themselves living in combat zones or forced into refugee camps with no other future on the horizon.

There are considerable flaws in "American War" — from badly melodramatic dialogue to highly contrived and derivative plot points — but El Akkad has so deftly imagined the world his characters inhabit, and writes with such propulsive verve, that the reader can easily overlook such lapses.

He demonstrates cool assurance at



"American War," about another U.S. civil war, is the debut novel by Omar El Akkad.

using details — many gathered, it seems, during his years as a reporter — to make his fictional future feel alarmingly real. And he writes here with boldness and audacity, using a collagelike method (involving fictional news clippings, oral history excerpts, memoirs, government documents) to help chronicle the events surrounding the Second American Civil War.

Those events include escalating battles over the use of fossil fuel; the



assassination of the United States president by a secessionist suicide bomber in 2073; horrifying drone attacks, massacres and guerrilla violence that further embitter both sides; and, just as the war is about to conclude in 2095 with a reunification ceremony, the release of a biological agent by a Southern terrorist that results in a decade-long plague claiming 110 million lives.

The Chestnut family at the center of

"American War" once led a quiet life in flood-ridden Louisiana. When the novel opens, the twin girls, Sarat and Dana, are 6; their brother, Simon, is 9. After a suicide bomber kills their father, the children and their mother, Martina, end up in Camp Patience — a "huge tent favela" for refugees near the Tennessee border. There they will remain for more than a half-dozen years.

Although "American War" is narrated, in part, by Benjamin Chestnut — Simon's son, who miraculously survives the plague — it is Benjamin's Aunt Sarat who stands at center stage. At first she bears more than a passing resemblance to several famous young-adult heroines. Like Katniss from "The Hunger Games" and Tris from the "Divergent" series, she's a feisty, unconventional girl forced by the harsh conditions of the dystopian world in which she lives to prove herself as a warrior. She is defiant, resourceful and willing to sacrifice her life to protect those she loves.

Along the way, however, Sarat will be tempted to turn to the dark side by an erudite man, Albert Gaines, who shows up at the refugee camp and tells her that he travels around the South, where the Northerners and their drones "have caused terrible carnage,"

looking for "special people — people who, if given the chance and the necessary tools, would stand up and face the enemy on behalf of those who can't."

Gaines becomes Sarat's teacher. He gives her books to read and teaches her about the natural world, and what the world was like before climate change altered the algorithms of everyday life. He also feeds her the mythology of the South — how much was real and how much was fantasy doesn't matter to her; "she believed every word." He also plays to her sense of grievance and anger — rage that will build as she witnesses the calamities of war and loses one family member after another.

It becomes clear to the reader pretty early on just what Gaines is recruiting Sarat to do — in fact, El Akkad scatters a bread-crum trail of clues through the novel, as he tracks Sarat's increasingly risky peregrinations after a gruesome massacre at Camp Patience. In recounting Sarat's emotional evolution — and the dreadful choices she will be asked to make — El Akkad has written a novel that not only maps the harrowing effects of violence on one woman and her family, but also becomes a disturbing parable about the ruinous consequences of war on ordinary civilians.



# TRAVEL



Left, Toby's Estate, which has a stall in the UrbanSpace in Vanderbilt Market in Manhattan; right, Culture Espresso, which opened its first shop in 2009.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

# Coffee makes a stand in Midtown Manhattan

### HEADS UP

BY MATT RODBARD

Finding coffee in Midtown Manhattan, home to nearly two-thirds of New York City hotel rooms and a good number of caffeine-starved office workers to boot, is as easy as walking down the street. There are about 50 Starbucks locations from 33rd to 52nd streets alone, according to the company, with aggressive expansion planned from the savvy chain Gregory's Coffee. But seeking out *well-made* coffee — with delicately roasted beans and swan-neck kettles pouring precisely into a row of Kalita Waves (the Ferrari of Japanese pour-over filters) — has more often been reserved for a trip downtown, or to Brooklyn. Not anymore.

Over the last couple of years an impressive lineup of ambitious coffee bars and cafes, with well-trained baristas

and adventurous, avocado-toast-forward menus, has bloomed in all parts of Midtown. “We like to think of ourselves as an oasis,” said Richard Shaer, chief executive of Taylor Street Baristas, a popular London-based, Australia-inspired outfit that opened its New York City flagship a year ago on lightly traveled East 40th Street.

Mr. Shaer, along with a handful of independent operators in Midtown, is convinced that operating in a prime, and expensive, corner location is not required. With the right brew (ideally with expertly roasted beans arriving from a micro-lot somewhere in Bolivia or Ethiopia), customers will come.

And come they have, to hidden-away gems like Ninth Street Espresso off the lobby of the Lombardy Hotel; Toby's Estate, at a stall in the UrbanSpace in Vanderbilt Market; and the San Francisco import Blue Bottle, with a location buried in the dim concourse of Rockefeller Center.

On a nondescript stretch of Lexington Avenue near East 40th Street sits Little Collins, a tiny Australian-style cafe with a United Nations menu of sandwiches (gyro, country ham, schnitzel) and de rigueur Down Under coffee drinks including the flat white (steamed milk poured over espresso) and the piccolo (think of a baby latte). Before Leon Unglik opened the cafe in 2013, he was a corporate lawyer in Midtown and was quite depressed by his coffee options.

“I found the lack of a good coffee to be frustrating and unbearable,” he said recently, sitting at one of the narrow tables in the packed cafe as a line of hungry office workers snaked out the door. After establishing a “very serious” espresso setup at his TriBeCa apartment and regularly knocking back a few shots to load up for the day, he took matters into his own hands. “We didn't know how this neighborhood would respond,” he said as baristas hurriedly steamed milk and pulled espressos.

But no coffee outfit has fixed Midtown's overlooked areas quite like Culture Espresso. In 2009 a first location opened near the corner of 38th Street and Avenue of the Americas, an area whose claim to fame is being the city's unofficial bead district.

A few blocks away, a second shop, tucked mid-block on West 36th Street in the garment district, opened in 2014 with a \$25,000 Synesso espresso machine and, soon, a passionate fan base. “The drip is good, the espresso is fine, the cookies win over everybody,” said Matt Buchanan, an editor at Eater, the restaurant and culture website, pointing out the cafe's gooey chocolate chip cookies with an unholy chip-to-dough ratio.

But don't be fooled: Culture, whose name reflects the cafe's rotating art and photography exhibitions as well as the owners' intent to build a coffee culture in Midtown, is serious about what's in the cup. The operators work exclusively with the cult roasters Heart, of Portland,

Ore., and serve a slim list of classics like drip, espresso and cold brew that has regulars lining up.

Culture's general manager, Johnny Norton, said the three Midtown locations — the latest opened in Hell's Kitchen in February — were determined by walking the streets to see where coffee-less zones existed and to gauge foot traffic and density. “I always thought it was silly for writing off the middle of one of the best cities in the world,” he said. Those instincts proved to be spot-on. “When you are going up against Starbucks and Pret a Manger, you are kind of received universally as a hero,” Mr. Norton said.

And as for the next neighborhood in need of a coffee-bar boom? “The coffee situation near One World Trade is pretty grim,” said Mr. Buchanan, who predicted that Blue Bottle would do extraordinarily well if it opened a flagship store downtown. “For coffee, downtown could be the new Midtown.”



Taylor Street Baristas.

# Getting the most out of a spa visit

### TRAVEL TIPS

BY SHIVANI VORA

Booking a treatment at your hotel's spa is a way to relax on any vacation. But according to Kimberly Kelder, the lead aesthetician at Miraval Resort & Spa in Tucson, Ariz., a spa visit can leave some people feeling more stressed out than chilled out. “If you don't pick the right service or are unsure about spa etiquette, it's hard to have an enjoyable spa experience,” she said.

Here, she shares her tips on how to get the most out of your trip to a spa.

**CHOOSE THE RIGHT TREATMENT** Many spas have a long list of treatments on offer, and while several may sound appealing, it's important to pick the best option for you. If you have sore muscles, for example, a deep tissue massage is an ideal choice, and if a dry complexion is of concern, a hydrating facial would do the trick. “You're going to love your time at the spa if you pay attention to what your body needs versus what's trendy or what the spa is touting as a so-called miracle treatment,” Ms. Kelder said.

**KNOW HOW MUCH TO UNDRRESS** Upon checking in to the spa, you'll likely be



LARS LEETARU

given a robe to wear during your treatment, but figuring out what to don underneath can be confusing. Ms. Kelder said that for facials, only the shoulders and chest need to be exposed. For massages and body treatments, however, it's ideal to disrobe completely, including undergarments — doing so will allow the therapist to target your muscles more effectively, she said. If you'd prefer a massage without disrobing, opt for a Thai massage, during which you'll wear loosefitting clothes.

**BE VOCAL** Ms. Kelder said that many spa

disappointments happen because spa-goers don't communicate with their therapists. If your shoulders are particularly tight, for example, tell your massage therapist before the start of the service so that he or she can spend a few extra minutes working on them. Also, speak up if you have sensitive skin or allergies to certain ingredients. And during your treatment, don't be afraid to ask for more or less pressure during a massage, an additional blanket or towel if you're chilly or anything else that will make your service more pleasurable.

**AVOID PEAK TIMES AND DON'T RUSH** Hotel spas tend to be busiest on weekdays from 5 p.m. until closing and all day on weekends; during these times, you can likely expect less attention from the spa's staff and more crowded locker and waiting rooms. Going on weekdays before 5 p.m., on the other hand, when there are fewer patrons, makes for a more relaxed visit. Also, no matter when you go, be sure to arrive 20 minutes in advance of your treatment, and plan to stay for at least another 30 minutes after it's done. “Enjoying the spa's ambience and availing of any facilities, such as a steam room, are a part of the relaxation you're there to seek, and rushing in and out defeats that purpose,” Ms. Kelder said.

# The comic who packs comic books

### CARRY-ON

BY NELL MCSHANE WULFHART

Rob Corddry is a comedian, former “Daily Show” correspondent and the creator of “Childrens Hospital,” a subversive parody of medical television shows. He's now starring in “Ballers,” an HBO comedy about N.F.L. players and their entourages.

Based in Los Angeles, Mr. Corddry travels by air for work, but with his family he often prefers to go by car. “My wife and I love road trips, and the kids are old enough that they're into it as much as we are; they're 8 and 10. Our plan was, once they grew out of the ‘annoying on an airplane or in a car’ age, we started starving them of any sort of video entertainment [at home]. So then when we give them iPads in the car, they're just gone.”

But getting the children to look up from the screens and out the window is a struggle. “We'll do the requisite family games, spying things with our little eyes. Sometimes my wife and I will sing, but my kids have reached the age where they're starting to roll their eyes. This summer, though, when we did a little New England road trip, we were heavy

into the ‘Hamilton’ soundtrack. I would take the Aaron Burr part and my 8-year-old would take the Hamilton part.”

One regular journey is a family trip to Telluride, Colo., for Presidents' Day weekend. “I do a very small comedy festival there, but it's just an excuse to see some snow once a year,” Mr. Corddry said. “My kids take ski lessons every time we go, but my wife and I, over the years, our ski time has dwindled. Now that I'm 46, I have a knowledge of my own mortality. I'm just afraid of it now; the fun does not outweigh the fear.” Here's what he packs for each trip.

**MEDICATIONS** “The inside of my bag looks like it belongs to Woody Allen. If you have an ailment traveling with me, I have something for it. Pepto-Bismol, Emergen-C, Aleve, Advil, Excedrin, cough drops, Wet Ones to wipe down that dirty airplane tray — I travel with what's practically a first aid kit.”

**CABLES AND CHARGERS** “I have a designated bag of all kinds of outdated computer wires, every connector imaginable. I should probably go through it and throw out my USB printer cable — who needs that anymore? Do I need two micro USB connectors? I don't remember plugging them into anything. I'm an

Eagle Scout and the Boy Scout motto is ‘Be prepared,’ so I'm prepared. To go back in time.”

**AQUAPHOR** “If I find myself on a six-hour flight without a spare tube of Aquaphor for my lips, I'll start freaking out. I'm — let's say I'm dependent on it. In my drawer right now I've got five tubes. If I leave my house and I don't have my Aquaphor there's a little flutter, I panic a little bit. My lips don't actually get dry; it's a mental tic I have. I've got to be equipped with at least two tubes of Aquaphor everywhere I go.”

**GUITAR** “I'm teaching myself how to play guitar. So I bring my acoustic or an electric. When I bring the electric I have this little headphone amplifier called the Line 6 Pocket POD, and it's this really comprehensive amplifier. You can make any sound, basically, that a guitar can make, through headphones. It's really neat.”

**COMIC BOOKS** “I usually go to the comic book store before I travel. I will read anything by Jeff Lemire: I also like Jason Aaron, Grant Morrison and Warren Ellis. The kids don't like football, no matter how much I try, but with comic books I got in early and they love them.”

The New York Times

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Gretchen Morgenson, *Times Columnist* has covered the world financial markets for The Times and won the Pulitzer Prize for her coverage of Wall Street. At Forbes, she became national press secretary to Steve Forbes when he ran for president. She has won two Gerald Loeb awards.



Roger Cohen, *Times Op-Ed Columnist* joined The New York Times in 1990. He was a foreign correspondent for more than a decade before becoming acting foreign editor on Sept. 11, 2001, and foreign editor six months later. Since 2004, he has written a column for the International New York Times, formerly known as The International Herald Tribune. In 2009 he was named a columnist of The New York Times. His columns appear on Tuesdays and Fridays.



Richard Paddock, *Times Foreign Correspondent* reports on Southeast Asia as a contributor to The New York Times based in Bangkok. He has worked as a foreign correspondent for more than a dozen years and reported from nearly 50 countries on five continents, including wartime Bosnia and Iraq.

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