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The New York Times

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In Pakistan, Sharif fights for survival

Abbas Nasir

OPINION

Two weeks before its general elections on July 25, Pakistan is bracing for another political storm. On Friday, an anticorruption court sentenced former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to 10 years in prison in a case arising after the Panama Papers leaks revealed that Mr. Sharif's family owned four undeclared apartments in London. The court also sentenced Maryam Nawaz Sharif, his daughter and political heir, to seven years in prison.

The conviction and impending arrest of Mr. Sharif and his daughter is expected to turn the electoral season fraught and potentially impact the results, if Mr. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, also known as P.M.L.N., goes to the polls without its star campaigners.

Greater turmoil is expected as the former premier faces imminent arrest two weeks before elections.

The court acquitted Mr. Sharif of the charges that he had acquired the apartments by corrupt, dishonest or illegal means but convicted him for his failure to explain how he came to own the properties, as he and his family have been living in them since the early 1990s. Mr. Sharif was in London with his wife, who is battling cancer, when he was convicted.

Mr. Sharif and his daughter have announced their decision to return to Pakistan on Friday. They would face immediate arrest and imprisonment. The former prime minister and his daughter have repeatedly claimed their innocence and attributed their travails to a falling out with the military over his attempts to assert civilian supremacy.

The electoral campaign has been fraught, with the media denouncing moves by the military to dictate coverage. The military is also seen to be working with the judiciary to undermine Mr. Sharif and his party, and promote the cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf Party, known as the P.T.I.

The electoral battle is being fought for 342 seats in Pakistan's National Assembly, the largest share being 183 seats from the populous Punjab Province. Mr. Sharif's P.M.L.N. won 188 seats in the 2013 elections. The Pakistan People's Party was a distant second with 46 seats, and Mr. Khan's P.T.I. won a mere 34 seats.

Mr. Khan was dogged as he pushed for the judicial proceedings against Mr. Sharif and his family. He and his party celebrated the verdict as a first in the

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The New York Times publishes opinion from a wide range of perspectives in hopes of promoting constructive debate about consequential questions.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GILLES SABRIÉ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A screen image showing facial recognition software in use in Beijing. Xi Jinping, China's top leader, has begun a major upgrade of the surveillance state.

A.I., shame and lots of cameras

ZHENGZHOU, CHINA

China is investing billions in high-tech systems to track and control its people

BY PAUL MOZUR

In the Chinese city of Zhengzhou, a police officer wearing facial recognition glasses spotted a heroin smuggler at a train station.

In Qingdao, a city famous for its German colonial heritage, cameras powered by artificial intelligence helped the police snatch two dozen criminal suspects in the midst of a big beer festival.

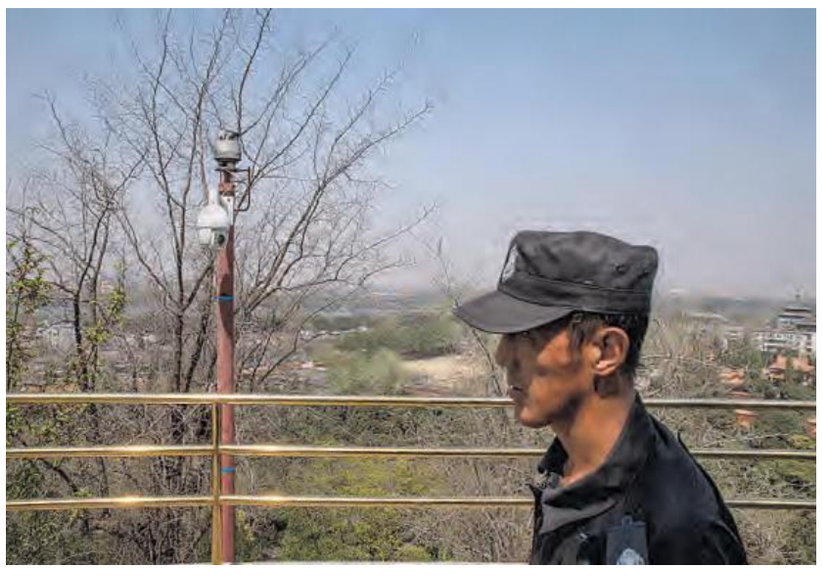
In Wuhu, a fugitive murder suspect was identified by a camera as he bought food from a street vendor.

With millions of cameras and billions of lines of code, China is building a high-tech authoritarian future.

Beijing is embracing technologies like facial recognition and artificial intelligence to identify and track 1.4 billion people.

It wants to assemble a vast and unprecedented national surveillance system, with crucial help from its thriving technology industry.

"In the past, it was all about instinct," said Shan Jun, the deputy chief of the police at the railway station in Zhengzhou, where the heroin smuggler was caught. "If you missed something, you missed it."



A surveillance camera in a Beijing park. China already has an estimated 200 million surveillance cameras — four times as many as the United States.

China is reversing the vision of technology as a great democratizer, bringing people more freedom and connecting them to the world. In China, technology is bringing increased control.

In some cities, cameras scan train stations for China's most wanted. Billboard-size displays show the faces of jaywalkers and list the names of people who don't pay their debts. Facial recognition scanners guard the entrances to housing complexes. Already, China has an estimated 200 million surveillance cameras — four times as many as the United States.

Such efforts supplement other systems that track internet use and communications, hotel stays, train and plane trips and even car travel in some places.

Even so, China's ambitions outstrip its abilities. Technology in place at one train station or crosswalk may be lacking in another city, or even the next block over. Bureaucratic inefficiencies prevent the creation of a nationwide network.

For the Communist Party, that may not matter. Far from hiding their efforts, the Chinese authorities regularly state, and overstate, their capabilities. In China, even the perception of surveillance can keep the public in line.

Some places are further along than others.

Invasive mass-surveillance software has been set up in China's far west to track members of the Uighur Muslim minority and map their relations with friends and family, according to software viewed by The New York Times.

"This is potentially a totally new way for the government to manage the economy and society," said Martin Chorzempa, a fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

SURVEILLANCE, PAGE 4

At gathering of U.S. allies, Trump is the wild card

BRUSSELS

NATO leaders are bracing for a conflict over spending before he meets with Putin

BY STEVEN ERLANGER AND JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS

NATO summit meetings were once ritualistic events, with the member nations assembling to proclaim that the alliance had never been stronger and pledging to work together on the security issues of the day.

In the Trump era, however, they have become anxiety-producing confrontations where the main object is to avoid long-term damage to the military alliance. This time the stakes are even higher, as the allies seek to project strength and solidarity against Russian threats.

For the allies, that has meant figuring out how to handle President Trump, who arrives in Brussels for this year's summit meeting having already pressured some member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to expand their military budgets.

The meeting, which begins on Wednesday, comes just days before Mr. Trump's planned meeting with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia in Helsinki, Finland.

As he has prepared for Brussels, Mr. Trump has accused Europe of exploiting the United States and hinted that he might play the role of agitator at NATO, sowing disagreement among allies, which would play into Mr. Putin's hands.

On Monday, Mr. Trump tweeted that the United States was "spending far more on NATO than any other country." He said the situation "is not fair, nor is it acceptable" and that it "benefits Europe far more than it does the U.S."

Allies are concerned that Mr. Trump may try to bargain American troop strength in Europe for increased military spending by others. That might entail a threat to reduce American spending on the European Reassurance Initiative to improve force readiness, while challenging allies to make up the difference, said Tomas Valasek, a former Slovak ambassador to NATO and now director of Carnegie Europe.

"To be honest, no one really knows how Trump will act during the summit," Mr. Valasek said. "His unpredictability is not a byproduct but a design feature — he likes it that way. He comes to this meeting not only prepared to go into confrontation with his peers and allies but with his own staff."

Mr. Trump appears to have a special animus toward Germany, believing that Berlin has developed a vibrant social system and thriving export-driven economy unfairly, on the back of the United States, by not spending enough on defense.

NATO, PAGE 4

If it's on 'Love Island,' Britain's talking about it

ITV, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Adam Collard holding Rosie Anna Williams on "Love Island." One of the show's creators said its draw is seeing relationships forming and breaking apart in real time.

LONDON

Reality show is attracting millions, but with no small amount of finger-wagging

BY ALEX MARSHALL

Scott Bell and Jamie Murray Pullan were sitting in the TV room of their student dorm recently, watching one of England's most popular shows and pondering a pressing question.

"There's no way he's 22!" Mr. Bell said of Adam Collard, a contestant on "Love Island" who was onscreen chatting with some women. "I don't know why they aren't staring at him, mouths open, going, 'How are you 22? You look about 30,'" Mr. Pullan added.

It took the dogged reporting of The Daily Mail to put the national debate to rest, obtaining Mr. Collard's birth certificate and showing he was, in fact, just 22.

"Love Island," now in its fourth season, is at first glance just another romantic reality show. A group of mainly 20-somethings from Britain are thrown into a villa on the Spanish island of Majorca for eight weeks. They are immediately required to couple up, then six nights a week, the program documents their relationship ups and downs.

But "Love Island" has turned into a phenomenon, bringing millions of viewers to a minor TV channel, stoking chatter from pubs to Parliament and becoming the go-to show for people looking to assess the state of British life, or at least to pontificate about it.

Last year, the prevalence of smoking in the show led to a debate in the House of Lords about whether broadcasting rules around smoking should be strengthened. (The program does not show smoking anymore.)

This season, Mr. Collard's behavior has led to debate about how men treat women and to accusations of "gaslighting," a form of emotional manipulation.

Less seriously, the show has even been blamed for a trend: the disappear-

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What 'Love Island' says to Britain

LOVE ISLAND, FROM PAGE 1

ance of chest hair. Some of the biggest rows surrounding the show have, often uncomfortably, focused on contestants' intellect.

Reality shows are not exactly known for high-minded conversation, but newspapers went into overdrive in June after one contestant, Hayley Hughes, a 21-year-old model from Liverpool, appeared not to know about Brexit, the term for Britain's imminent departure from the European Union.

Shortly after Ms. Hughes was voted out of the villa, Piers Morgan, a host of "Good Morning Britain," asked her if she knew what Pythagoras's theorem was — though it turned out he didn't know himself.

A report that more people had applied to be on "Love Island" than had tried to get into Oxford and Cambridge provoked perhaps the strongest reactions. Giles Coren, a columnist for The Times of London, called the show "a vile, sexist, apocalyptically tasteless, immoral, sick, vomitous abomination, made by morons for morons."

Objections aside, the show has been a genuine word-of-mouth hit for its broadcaster, ITV2, with audiences growing every season since its debut in 2015. It has been attracting some three million viewers a night, an enormous number for a lesser-known network. And it is drawing around 40 percent of 16-to-34-year-olds watching television in its time slot, a higher proportion of this advertiser-coveted audience than some major-network shows like "The X Factor," according to Overnights.tv, a British ratings company.

Though "X Factor" and some other shows attract many more viewers over all, Stig Abell, editor of the highbrow Times Literary Supplement and a regular commentator on British life, said "Love Island" had made itself seem far more important — in part thanks to plotlines irresistible to the media.

"I think a lot of middle-class, middle-aged journalists like putting this preposterous intellectual scaffolding on it, saying it's a bit like Shakespeare or Jane Austen," Mr. Abell said. "It's obviously not. It's a lot of people with no body hair trying to get off with each other."

Still, he acknowledged, "there's pleasure in pruriently peering into people's love lives, especially when they're not wearing many clothes."

There's more "Love Island" on the way. An Australian version is being filmed on Majorca. A second series of Germany's (subtitle: "Hot Flirts and Real Love") begins in September. Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Danish versions are starting this autumn. (The first three British seasons are available in the United States on Hulu.)

New viewers will not find the format hard to grasp. The villa is always on a European holiday island so hot that contestants want to wear bathing suits at all times. Once the participants are coupled up, the producers use every trick at their disposal to "test" successful relationships — games, dates or having a pool of some 40 extra contestants waiting to be flown in at a moment's notice, including some people's exes.

The public decides on the winning pair, who are given two envelopes, one of which contains 50,000 British pounds (about $66,000). Whoever opens it can decide to keep it, or share it with the supposed love.

Richard Cowles, one of the show's creators, said part of its draw is the ability to see relationships forming and breaking apart in real time. "We can all look at everyone else's relationships, all of our friends, and we say what's right and what's wrong — that's what everyone's doing when they watch the show," he said in an interview last month at the production site in Majorca. If some people write off the show as a tasteless celebration of hookup culture, Mr. Cowles notes that two former contestants are getting married this summer, and that another couple had already had a child. He said the show is "honestly, genuinely trying to cast people who are looking for love."

Of course, it does not hurt ratings when the camera catches them finding love beneath a comforter. As Mr. Pullan, the fan, put it: "It's such trash, you just get sucked into it."

Mr. Collard's love life in particular has sucked in the British public this season.

A chiseled, 6-foot-4 personal trainer from Newcastle, Mr. Collard assumed the role of the reality-show villain. One recent afternoon, after finishing a cigarette off-camera, he walked over to the villa's pool and chatted with Jack Fincham, a stationery salesman, about the grief he was getting from Rosie Anna Williams, a lawyer from Wales he had just dumped, even though they had had an under-comforter experience. Ms. Williams sat nearby, in tears.

ITV

The setting in Majorca, Spain, for the Australian version of "Love Island." Germany has its own series, and there will soon be Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Danish versions.

"I think a lot of middle-class, middle-aged journalists like putting this preposterous intellectual scaffolding on it."

In a pitch-black cabin just yards away, Mike Spencer, one of the show's editors, watched it all happen on one of the 83 video feeds he has at his disposal to create that evening's one-hour show.

"We've all been a Rosie," he said with a sigh.

Mr. Collard's happiness in chasing women, while stringing along those he was already with, has stirred examination of male behavior in relationships. Ms. Williams was his second partner, but he expressed interest in two other women while with her.

Women's Aid, a charity, called Mr. Collard's actions unacceptable. "In a relationship, a partner questioning your memory of events, trivializing your thoughts or feelings and turning things around to blame you can be part of pattern of gaslighting and emotional abuse," the group said in a news release last month.

He did apologize on-camera to Ms. Williams and appeared ready to redeem himself further, becoming genuinely enamored with his next partner, Zara McDermott, a civil servant.

When she was voted off by the other housemates, Mr. Collard even expressed a desire to leave with her.

Within three episodes, he was kissing a new partner, though he later confessed that he still had feelings for Ms. McDermott.

He can now find out if she still has feelings for him. Last week, he was voted off.

Thai cave ordeal was only their latest challenge

MAE SAI, THAILAND

BY HANNAH BEECH

Adul Sam-on, 14, has never been a stranger to peril.

At age 6, Adul had already escaped a territory in Myanmar known for guerrilla warfare, opium cultivation and methamphetamine trafficking. His parents slipped him into Thailand, in the hopes that proper schooling would provide him with a better life than that of his illiterate, impoverished family.

But his greatest escape came on Tuesday, when he and 11 other members of a youth soccer team, along with their coach, were all finally freed from the Tham Luang Cave in northern Thailand, after an ordeal stretching more than two weeks.

For 10 days, Adul and his fellow Wild Boars soccer squad survived deep in the cave complex as their food, flashlights and drinking water diminished. By the time British divers found them on July 2, the Wild Boars and their coach looked skeletal.

It was Adul, the stateless descendant of a Wa ethnic tribal branch once known for headhunting, who played a critical role in the rescue, acting as interpreter for the British divers.

Proficient in English, Thai, Burmese, Mandarin and Wa, Adul politely communicated to the British divers his squad's greatest needs: food and clarity on just how long they had stayed alive.

When a teammate piped up in broken English, "Eat, eat, eat," Adul said he had already covered that point. In images released by the Thai Navy SEAL force, he had a huge grin on his gaunt face.

On Tuesday, the border town of Mae Sai, where Adul lived at a church, finally had cause to celebrate, as the Wild Boars' 18-day ordeal came to an end. In a three-day rescue mission, Adul and 12 others were safely extracted from the cave by a team of dozens of divers, doctors and support staff.

The extraordinary rescue of the youth soccer squad has been a rare cause for cheer in a nation that has endured four years of military governance and a growing rural-urban divide.

Mae Sai, where the Wild Boars play soccer, seems an unlikely place for a resurgence in Thai pride. Situated not far from where Thailand, Myanmar and Laos meet in the Golden Triangle, Mae Sai is home to a population that has at times been skeptical of the Thai state and its institutions.

The Golden Triangle is a smuggling center, and a sanctuary for members of various ethnic militias that have spent decades fighting for autonomy from a government in Myanmar that routinely represses them.

Three of the trapped soccer players, as well as their coach, Ekkapol Chantawong, are stateless ethnic minorities, accustomed to slipping across the border to Myanmar one day and returning for a soccer game in Thailand the next.

Their presence undercuts a Thai sense of nationhood that is girded by a triumvirate of institutions: the military, the monarchy and the Buddhist monastery.

After years of reputational decline because of an army coup in 2014 — one of a dozen successful putsches since the country abolished an absolute monarchy in 1932 — Thailand's military has been handed an opportunity to burnish its image.

Several of the soccer players freed after many days underground had entered the country as stateless children.

Thai Navy SEAL divers became the faces of the rescue operation. And a retired member of the Thai SEALs, Saman Gunan, 38, died during the effort to take air tanks into the cave to aid in the rescue. On Monday evening, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha of Thailand, the nation's junta chief, made his second visit to the cave site.

"The military will score some points here," said Rangsiman Rome, a student leader who has called for a restoration to democracy in Thailand, even as the military has repeatedly delayed elections and extended its rule. "They get the credit in this mission."

Thailand's monarchy has also been buoyed by the outpouring of support for the 13 members of the team.

King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun, who ascended to the throne in 2016, has engaged with the public more intensely during the caving crisis than at any other time during his brief reign.

The monarch's 13-year-old son, Prince Dipangkorn Rasmijoti, wrote a card in German, wishing the rescue mission success, according to the Royal Household Bureau. Among other donations, the king contributed 2,000 raincoats to the effort.

With the English that Adul used to communicate with the British divers on July 2, he was crucial in ensuring the safety of the Wild Boars. He is the top student in his class at the Ban Wiang Phan School in Mae Sai. His academic record and sporting prowess have earned him free tuition and daily lunch.

After crossing into Thailand eight years ago, Adul's parents dropped him off at a Baptist church in Mae Sai, asking that the pastor and his wife care for him. A quality education was not available in Myanmar's self-governing Wa region, where young boys can be in danger of getting dragooned into the local guerrilla force.

At the Ban Wiang Phan School, where 20 percent of students are stateless and half are members of ethnic minorities, the principal, Punnawit Thepsurin, said the boy's uncertain status — he has no citizenship papers from any country — has helped hone his strength. "Stateless children have a fighting spirit that makes them want to excel," he said. "Adul is the best of the best."

At least 440,000 stateless people live in Thailand, many of them victims of Myanmar's long years of ethnic strife, according to the United Nations refugee agency. Human-rights groups say the true number could be as high as three million — in a nation of nearly 70 million — even though the Thai government has refused to ratify the United Nations convention guaranteeing rights for refugees.

With little legal protection, undocumented workers in Thailand can be at the mercy of human traffickers or unscrupulous employers. But the Wild Boars provided a haven for stateless and Thai children alike. On weekends, the squad would often go on outdoor excursions in nearby jungles.

While a sign outside the Tham Luang Cave warns that monsoon downpours can transform internal passageways into powerful rivers within a few hours, the boys had explored its caverns before. A forecast of rain on June 23 did not dissuade the team from its adventure.

"They are at an age when they want to explore and learn new things," said Nopparat Khanthawong, the team's head coach, who did not join the expedition. "It's natural for them to go to the cave."

Initially, there was some speculation whether Mr. Ekkapol, the 25-year-old coach who took the boys into Tham Luang Cave, might be criminally culpable for overseeing a trip gone wrong. But local officials quickly dismissed such talk.

The parents of the Wild Boars have written letters supporting Mr. Ekkapol. "Coach Ek," said Adul's parents in a note dictated to an intermediary, "thank you for taking care of the boys and for helping them stay safe in the dark."

A stateless member of the ethnic Shan minority, Mr. Ekkapol has long experience caring for children. After his parents died in Myanmar when he was a young boy, he entered the Buddhist monkhood in Thailand for nearly a decade, a common option for orphans untethered from financial support.

One of Mr. Ekkapol's duties after he was ordained was taking care of younger novices, said Patcharadanai Kittisophano, a monk at the Phrathat Doi Wao temple, where the young coach now works as a custodian.

Mr. Ekkapol's years of spiritual training paid off in other ways. "In the cave, he taught the boys how to meditate so they could pass the time without stress," Mr. Patcharadanai said. "That helped save their lives."

While in the cave, Mr. Ekkapol sent out a note with Navy divers apologizing to the boys' parents for having led the team astray.

"Ek must have been blaming himself," said Prayuth Jetiyanukarn, the abbot of the Prathat Doi Wao temple, as he celebrated news of the whole team's extraction from the cave. "He had to be mindful and conquer his doubts so he could be strong for the kids."

Mr. Nopparat, the head coach, said that Mr. Ekkapol had withheld food and water from himself in the cave to provide for the boys.

"He would rather die than lose a single Wild Boar," Mr. Nopparat said. "That's the kind of person he is."

As for Adul's parents, they counseled the only one of their five children lucky enough to study in Thailand to be on his best behavior, even during the most traumatic of times.

"After you come out of the cave," they instructed their son in a note, "you have to say thank you to every single officer."

Muktita Suhartono contributed reporting.

YE AUNG THU/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

THAI NAVY SEALS

Top, ambulances left the Tham Luang Cave area on Tuesday, when the last Wild Boars players were rescued. Adul Sam-on, above right, acted as interpreter for British divers.

World

Randa Kamel leading a dance workshop attended by many Eastern European women in Cairo. Purists bemoan the foreign invasion of belly dance as a cultural travesty.

Participants in Ms. Kamel's workshop during an outing near Cairo, where foreigners have dominated the top flights of the belly-dancing scene in recent years.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURA BOUSHNAK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Ukrainian dancer Alla Kushnir, a law school graduate, appeared on "Ukraine's Got Talent" with an extravagant belly dance routine that set her on a new career path.

When outsiders steal the show

CAIRO DISPATCH
CAIRO

Foreign belly dancers are popular in Egypt, but critics say they sully the art

BY DECLAN WALSH
AND LAURA BOUSHNAK

When undercover police officers in Egypt swooped on an upscale nightclub on the Nile last spring and arrested a Russian belly dancer, the focus of their investigation was her costume — and what, if anything, lay beneath it.

Was the dancer known as Johara, whose sizzling video had become an overnight sensation, wearing the right "shorts," as modesty-protecting undergarments are officially called? Were they the right size? The appropriate color? Or was she, as some feared, wearing no shorts at all?

Johara, whose real name is Ekaterina Andreeva, 30, insisted on her innocence, but still the police marched her off to jail, where others argued over her fate.

Russian diplomats paid a visit. Her manager and her husband back in Moscow pressed her case. In her dingy cell, Ms. Andreeva gave an impromptu performance for a dozen fellow prisoners, mostly prostitutes and drug dealers.

"Those women treated me so well," she recalled. "They asked me to dance, and then we all danced together."

After three days, it seemed she would be deported. But at the last minute, a mysterious white knight intervened — a Libyan businessman with powerful connections, she was told — and she was sprung from jail.

It was a drama worthy of belly dance, a centuries-old art form that has long thrived on sensual intrigue. During the Second World War, German spies mingled with British officers at Madam Badia's cabaret; in the 1970s, dancers performed for American presidents.

In recent decades, belly dance has inspired conflicting impulses among Egyptians, who see it either as high art, racy entertainment or an excuse for moral grandstanding.

But Ms. Andreeva's plight also highlighted a rather touchy issue: If Cairo is the global capital of belly dance, then why do its hottest new stars come from everywhere but Egypt?

KIEV TO CAIRO

At a wedding in a plush Cairo suburb, a barefoot Alla Kushnir shimmied onto the flower-strewn dance floor, a whirlwind of quivers, twists and furious gyrations. Young men in tuxedos, grinning widely, clambered over one another for a better view of the belly dancer. Little girls in party dresses scurried behind, imitating her moves. A group of veiled women at a table clapped in approval.

The Russian belly dancer Ekaterina Andreeva, known as Johara, at a wedding in Cairo. Eastern European performers are a favorite among Egyptians.

"It feels like the Egyptian dancer is an endangered species, which is very sad. Sad for the art. Sad for Egypt."

"Coming to Egypt was my dream," said Ms. Kushnir, 33, who hails from Ukraine, while stuffing her outfit into a suitcase afterward.

Foreigners have dominated the top flights of Egypt's belly-dancing scene in recent years — Americans, Britons and Brazilians, but especially Eastern Europeans. They bring an athletic, high-energy sensibility to the dance, more disco than "Arabian Nights." Their sweeping routines contrast with the languid, subtly suggestive style of classic Egyptian stars. Some are overtly sexual.

Growing up in the port city of Nikolayev, Ms. Kushnir, 33, dreamed of being an archaeologist. She graduated in law. But in 2010, she appeared on a TV show, "Ukraine's Got Talent," with an extravagant belly-dance routine that set her on a new career path.

In one performance, she wore a black veil with a tray of burning candles on her head; in the other, she writhed in a pool of water supported by semi-naked men.

Then Ms. Kushnir moved to Cairo, the Broadway of belly dance, where she became a true star. She sometimes performs five times a night at upscale weddings and ritzy parties, where top performers can earn $1,200 or more. One of her videos has nine million views on YouTube.

Purists bemoan the foreign invasion as a cultural travesty. They accuse the outsiders of trampling on Arab heritage for profit and pushing the dance form in a brash direction. Even some foreigners agree.

"In many cases, we lack the nuance, subtlety and grace of Egyptians," said Diana Esposito, a Harvard graduate from New York who came to Egypt in 2008 on a Fulbright scholarship and stayed to pursue a career in belly dance.

Ms. Esposito, who performs as Luna of Cairo, noted that there were still thousands of Egyptian dancers. But most are in the lower rungs of the industry — seedy cabarets near the Pyramids or tourist traps on the Nile.

"It feels like the Egyptian dancer is an endangered species, which is very sad," said Ms. Esposito, who recently moved back to Brooklyn. "Sad for the art. Sad for Egypt."

Even so, Egyptian dance still has one undisputed queen — a dancer who by wide agreement stands above them all.

THE LAST EGYPTIAN QUEEN?

It was just after 3 a.m. at the cabaret in the luxury Semiramis Hotel when Dina glided onto the stage, glittering in the spotlight, as a 17-piece band struck up.

Bow-tied waiters bustled about. Puffs of cigar smoke lingered in the air. The audience — Arab couples, Western tourists, as many women as men — watched from red velveteen booths, utterly entranced. A legend across the Middle East, Dina Talaat Sayed has danced for princes, presidents and dictators in a career spanning four decades. "Ah yes, Qaddafi," she said with a wry smile, recalling the deposed Libyan strongman. "Funny man. Very funny."

Ms. Sayed also knows all about Egyptians' conflicted attitude about her profession.

"Love and hate — it's always been like this," she said. "Egyptians cannot have a wedding without a belly dancer. But if one of them marries your brother — oh, my God! That's a problem."

The stigma is part of a creeping puritanism that has stifled the arts in Egypt in recent decades. Now even a hint of a kiss is forbidden in Egyptian movies, song lyrics are sanitized, and moral vigilantes hound artists through the courts.

A pop singer, Shyma, is languishing in prison on charges of "inciting debauchery" for a sexually suggestive video; in 2015, a belly dancer was barred from standing for election because she "lacked a good reputation," a judge declared.

"Egyptians see an Egyptian dancer as a hooker," said Bassem Abd El Moneim, Ms. Andreeva's manager. "But a foreigner can be a star."

There are exceptions beyond Ms. Sayed. One prominent dancer, Amie Sultan, hails from a wealthy family and trained as a ballerina. Another, Fifi Abdou, an Egyptian national treasure viewed with both affection and mockery for her boisterous personality, has been reincarnated in retirement thanks to social media.

Recently, Ms. Abdou, 65, perched before a pair of iPads as she broadcast to her three million followers on Facebook and Instagram in an hourlong stream of affectionate babble and air kisses.

But for many Egyptians, the price of a career in belly dance can be too high.

Randa Kamel, who runs a major belly dance school in Cairo that attracts students from across the world, was beaten as a teenager by a father who disapproved of her dancing. Even now, her 17-year-old son hides her profession at his private high school, and she pulls off her glittering fake nails before meeting his teachers.

"That's why I don't go on TV," Ms. Kamel said. "I want my son to have a good life. There's a certain amount of fame that is not healthy."

A WELCOME NOTORIETY

Ms. Andreeva, the briefly jailed Russian belly dancer, still isn't sure what spurred the police raid in February, but she blesses the day.

Since then, bookings have soared, her appearance fee has doubled, and she is sought by the rich and powerful. Recent clients include the family of a major steel tycoon, the daughter of Egypt's prime minister and an exiled cousin of the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad.

Official concerns about her act — and her "shorts" — appear to have vanished. The shimmering dress she wore in the video that landed her in trouble has become a major part of her act.

Even the police chief who kept her in his jail has become a fan and booked Ms. Andreeva for several family weddings, said her manager, Mr. Moneim.

"She's famous now," he said, as he whisked her between gigs on a Friday night. "People love that."

Ms. Andreeva admitted that it was hard to match Egyptian dancers on some levels. "We are technically good, but they have that Arab soul," she said.

But she compensates by channeling the sheer, raucous energy of Egyptian audiences. "There's an emotion here that is incredible," she said. "It makes me feel like a rock star."

Nour Youssef contributed reporting.

Iran's public disgracing of a young dancer draws a backlash

TEHRAN

BY THOMAS ERDBRINK

Like many teenage girls, Maedeh Hojabri liked to dance in her bedroom, record it and post clips to Instagram.

But Ms. Hojabri lives in Iran, where women are not allowed to dance, at least not in public. The 19-year-old was quietly arrested in May and her page was taken down, leaving her 600,000 followers wondering where she had gone.

The answer came last week on state television, when some of her fans recognized a blurred image of Ms. Hojabri on a show called "Wrong Path." There she sobbingly admitted that dancing is a crime and that her family had been unaware she had videos of herself dancing in her bedroom to Western songs like "Bevbon," by Era Istrefi.

Whatever the authorities' intent, the public shaming of Ms. Hojabri and the arrest of others who have not been identified have created a backlash in a society already seething over a bad economy, corruption and a lack of personal freedoms.

Since Ms. Hojabri's televised confession, scores of Iranians have posted videos of themselves dancing in protest, while thousands more have posted pictures of her and written supportive posts on their Instagram pages.

But for Iran's hard-liners, who have regained some credibility since President Trump fulfilled their predictions by pulling out of the nuclear deal, her videos are yet another example of why Instagram, the only Western social media app still available in Iran, should be blocked. The messaging app Telegram was closed down in April.

In a further sign of hard-liner backlash, a woman who removed her compulsory Islamic head-covering in a public protest in February has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment and 18 years of probation, she said in an Instagram post on Sunday. The woman, Shaparak Shajarizadeh, who was arrested after photos of her act spread on social media, wrote that she had received a 20-year punishment "for protesting against an unjust law."

Last week the judiciary warned that Instagram, which has 24 million users in Iran, might be closed because of its "unwanted content." Ms. Hojabri and other internet celebrities like her are called "antlers" by hard-liners for the way they stand out on Instagram.

Maedeh Hojabri, 19, in a video image from Instagram. She was arrested in May.

But the public seems squarely on the side of Ms. Hojabri. "Really what is the result of broadcasting such confessions?" one Twitter user, Mohsen Bayatzanjani, wrote, using special software to gain access to Twitter, which is also banned in Iran. "What kind of audience would be satisfied? For whom would it serve as a lesson, seriously?"

The criticism was sharp and bold. "In this land corruption, rape or being a big thief, animal or child abuser, not having any dignity, is not a crime," Roya Mirelmi, an actress, wrote under a picture she posted of Ms. Hojabri that got 14,133 likes. "But in my motherland, having a beautiful smile, being happy and feeling good is not only a crime but a cardinal sin."

President Hassan Rouhani, elected in 2013 on the promise of expanding personal freedoms, has promoted social media, tried to defend Telegram and increased the speed of the internet to allow Iranians to stream video on their phones. But now, hard-liners have set their sights on Instagram.

In April, the commander of the national police, Kamal Hadianfar, announced that "Instagram celebrities" would soon be arrested and that 51,000 Instagram pages were under police surveillance for vulgar and obscene videos.

"Instagram started out as an innocent tool, available on the internet, where people would upload photos and write some words," said Hamidreza Taraghi, a hard-line analyst. "But the Westerners behind it gradually turned Instagram into a mischievous tool for dangerous subversive actions against the state or pornographic purposes," he said. "Naturally we must block it."

That Instagram should come into the cross hairs of the hard-liners is no surprise. For decades the ruling clerics, bowing to reality, have said that people are free to do as they like, but only in the privacy of their own homes.

"In my motherland, having a beautiful smile, being happy and feeling good is not only a crime but a cardinal sin."

So a balance has been maintained. In the public realm in Iran, conservative Islamic rules apply and are enforced, so women have to wear veils and are normally barred from singing or dancing. (There are exceptions, such as the dancing in the streets that followed a World Cup victory for Iran.) In the private sphere they are free to ignore the strictures.

But Instagram has brought down the walls between private and public life in Iran. All one has to do is search "#Iran" to peek right into the Iran the clerics do not want you to see: dancers, clips of the deposed shah, women in bikinis.

Iranian officials have grown increasingly exercised by the online behavior of their fellow citizens. On the "Wrong Path" program, a justice official said that many people online suffer from "inferiority complexes" and are only interested in getting as many likes as possible.

Talking to one of those arrested, the official, Farid Najafnia, said he was shocked.

"I asked, 'Did you have no shame, no modesty?'" he said in an interview for the TV program. "'You published publicly the most private things that should be protected by personal privacy.' She said: 'I recognize cyberspace as a totally private space.' Private, in a way that for instance 8,000 people would come and 'like' it? Is this real? Is this true?"

In 2014 six young people were arrested after making their versions of "Happy," a video by the American performer Pharrell Williams. They were brought on state television, where they confessed and were sentenced to 90 lashes, though the punishment was never administered.

One of the members of the group, Reihane Taravati, went on to become an Instagram celebrity.

WORLD

GABRIELLA DEMCZUK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mr. Trump's advisers say that the president is ready to confront Vladimir Putin about Russia's "malign activities," and that the United States wants a strong and unified NATO.

NATO allies brace for Trump

NATO, FROM PAGE 1

At a campaign rally last week in Montana, Mr. Trump previewed his trip to Brussels to thousands of supporters. "I'll see NATO and I'll tell NATO, 'You've got to start paying your bills,'" he said. "The United States is not going to take care of everything."

He also said he had suggested to Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany that the tens of thousands of United States troops who are stationed in her country might not be worth the expenditure — an opinion he has shared privately with advisers at the White House, according to one person familiar with the discussions.

Last month, Mr. Trump wrote personal letters to the leaders of several NATO allies, taking them to task for failing to live up to a goal set in 2014 that every member work toward spending 2 percent of its gross domestic product on defense. His note to Ms. Merkel was particularly pointed, holding Germany responsible for other allies' shortfalls as well as its own.

Germany has promised to increase military spending to 1.5 percent of its economy by 2024. While not the 2 percent level, Berlin will argue that will still be more than any other NATO country other than the United States.

Norbert Röttgen, chairman of the German Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, said the answer to Mr. Trump is "to accept he has a point, and respond by displaying more European strength and enhancing European defense in cooperation with NATO." As a whole, the alliance's European members spend about $200 billion a year.

"That's a lot, but it's cost inefficient, militarily ineffective and lacks political weight and impact," he said. "We need to strengthen the European pillar of NATO."

Still, the fear is that Mr. Trump will seek to bargain — to conflate trade and security — as he has already done with South Korea and Japan.

Europeans cannot accept making collective security transactional, or dependent on actions on tariffs or specific spending targets in a relationship that is mutually beneficial, said Robin Niblett, director of Chatham House, a policy institute in London.

"It can feel like a protection racket, trading security for economic return,"

The fear is that President Trump will conflate trade and security, as he has already done with South Korea and Japan.

Mr. Niblett said, especially as Mr. Trump "then goes off to see Putin."

Mr. Trump has dismissed concerns about Mr. Putin as overblown.

Last month, he suggested that Russia should be readmitted to the Group of 7, from which it was expelled after illegally annexing Crimea.

During a phone call with Mr. Putin in March, when the president was urged by aides not to congratulate the Russian president on his electoral victory, Mr. Trump did just that.

He told Mr. Putin that Russia and the United States should get along better. And he described as "stupid people" the unnamed Trump administration officials whom the Russian president said had tried to prevent the call from happening, according to a person with direct knowledge of the conversation.

Mr. Trump's stance has alarmed many conservatives. The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, posted a tweet last week with reminders that appeared designed to speak directly to Mr. Trump ahead of his trip.

"Things to remember before @realDonaldTrump travels to Europe," it said. "Russia is the aggressor — Ukraine is the victim. Crimea belongs to Ukraine. NATO & US troops in Europe serve our national interests. Europeans must spend more on defense. Putin's track record shows he can't be trusted."

Mr. Trump's advisers have struck a far sharper tone against Russia.

They say that the president is ready to confront Mr. Putin about Russia's "malign activities," and that the United States wants a strong and unified NATO. They also have dismissed any suggestion that Washington would consider pulling back its military presence or commitment to the alliance in response to what it considers to be under-spending by member countries.

"The major thing, the major deliverable, the major overall theme of this summit is going to be NATO's strength and unity," Kay Bailey Hutchison, the United States ambassador to NATO, said in a conference call with reporters last week. She said she had heard nothing about adjusting the United States' military presence in Germany, and praised European allies for spending more on their defense, saying it would be a main focus of the gathering.

"Every one of our allies — 100 percent — are increasing defense spending," Ms. Hutchison said. "So that is something that we will talk about as an achievement, but also that we need to do more."

Mr. Trump's advisers are hoping to avoid a blowup akin to the one the president provoked at the Group of 7 summit meeting in Quebec last month, and have pointed Mr. Trump to evidence that NATO allies have responded to his aggressive pressure by increasing their own military spending.

The worry in Europe is that Mr. Putin will flatter Mr. Trump and play on the American president's notion of himself as a great negotiator in face-to-face meetings. They cite the Singapore summit with Kim Jong-un of North Korea, following the Group of 7 crackup, when Mr. Trump emerged to announce the cancellation of longstanding military exercises with South Korea — without consulting or informing either the South Korean government or the Pentagon.

They fear that Mr. Trump might unilaterally cancel planned NATO exercises, in particular Trident Juncture, a large one planned for late October, and Anakonda, for November, to practice the defense of Poland. And they are concerned he might abandon sanctions on Russia over Crimea and eastern Ukraine.

"In the past, Europe did not doubt that U.S. interests and values were fundamentally aligned with theirs," said Daniel M. Price, who was an international economic adviser to President George W. Bush and a White House veteran of major summit meetings.

"Now they wonder whether they can count on us in times of crisis without our first checking to see if they are current on their rent or royalty payments," Mr. Price said. "The decline in confidence is palpable."

Julie Hirschfeld Davis reported from Washington, and Steven Erlanger from Brussels. Maggie Haberman contributed reporting from New York.

Showing another side of the White House

WASHINGTON

U.S. first lady to represent more open administration in weeklong trip to Europe

BY KATIE ROGERS

After weeks of solo travel around the United States, the first lady, Melania Trump, plans to revive her child-focused project "Be Best" as she accompanies her husband on a weeklong trip through Europe, the White House has said.

The trip, with diplomatic-and-golf-focused hops planned between Belgium, England, Scotland and Finland, began Tuesday. It will be a high-profile re-entry into the spotlight for Mrs. Trump, who has not done much with Be Best since starting it days before she was hospitalized for a kidney condition in May. In June, she sat out the president's visit to Quebec for the Group of 7 summit meeting and a later meeting in Singapore with Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader. In recent weeks she has instead focused on visits with immigrant children detained at the United States' border with Mexico.

Mrs. Trump will participate in at least two events in Europe, including one in London where she is expected to bring up Be Best, said Stephanie Grisham, Mrs. Trump's communications director.

Mrs. Trump will also meet with Philip May, the husband of Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain, while President Trump meets with Mrs. May.

"He's looking forward to meeting Melania," Mrs. May told The Sunday Times of London about her husband's preparation for the visit. "He has been out and bought a new suit."

Over all, Mrs. Trump's task is to try to present a more open side of an administration that has increasingly isolated itself from its closest allies and embraced dictators and authoritarian rulers. The trip will include a NATO meeting in Brussels as well as a meeting in Helsinki between Mr. Trump and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

"It is important to her that she represents our country in a positive way," Ms. Grisham said, "while paying respect to the host countries we are visiting."

Not all of Mrs. Trump's public relations efforts have gone smoothly. In June she created headlines around the world after boarding a plane to visit migrant children in Texas wearing a jacket with the phrase "I Really Don't Care, Do U?" printed on the back. Mrs. Trump's office has declined to explain the reason she wore it, except to say it was a decision the first lady made on her own.

DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The first lady, Melania Trump, has sat out the president's recent trips abroad but will participate in at least two events in Europe.

But she has had some success. On Mr. Trump's first trip abroad last year, the conservative Saudi press praised the first lady's manner and style of dress. She had a lighthearted exchange with Pope Francis over the president's diet, in contrast with a somber-looking group photo taken minutes later. Her fashion choices have been pored over by journalists and on Instagram.

The White House staff has also used her, not always successfully, to distract Mr. Trump. Last July when Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin spent more than two hours in a meeting that went far longer than planned, the first lady was sent in to try to end it.

"People were sticking their heads in the door," Rex Tillerson, the former secretary of state, who was in the meeting, said at the time. Officials "sent the first lady at one point to see if they could get us out of there."

"But it didn't work," he said.

Katherine Jellison, a professor at Ohio University who studies first ladies, said that Mrs. Trump had her work cut out for her on the trip.

"This first lady probably has some challenges in that her husband is not a favorite among Europeans and European leaders," Ms. Jellison said in an interview. "I suspect that she will try to be particularly charming and win over locals on these side events where she goes out by herself."

A.I. and cameras tighten China's grip

SURVEILLANCE, FROM PAGE 1

"The goal is algorithmic governance," he added.

THE SHAME GAME

The intersection south of Changhong Bridge in the city of Xiangyang used to be a nightmare. Cars drove fast and jaywalkers darted into the street.

Then last summer, the police put up cameras linked to facial recognition technology and a big outdoor screen. Photos of lawbreakers were displayed alongside their names and government ID numbers. People were initially excited to see their faces on the board, said Guan Yue, a spokeswoman, until propaganda outlets told them it was punishment.

"If you are captured by the system and you don't see it, your neighbors or colleagues will, and they will gossip about it," she said. "That's too embarrassing for people to take."

China's new surveillance is based on an old idea: Only strong authority can bring order to a turbulent country. Mao Zedong took that philosophy to devastating ends, as his top-down rule brought famine and then the Cultural Revolution.

His successors also craved order but feared the consequences of totalitarian rule. They formed a new understanding with the Chinese people. In exchange for political impotence, the citizens would be mostly left alone and allowed to get rich.

It worked. Censorship and police powers remained strong, but China's people still found more freedom. That new attitude helped usher in decades of breakneck economic growth. Today, that unwritten agreement is breaking down.

China's economy isn't growing at the same pace. It suffers from a severe wealth gap. After four decades of fatter paychecks and better living, its people have higher expectations.

Xi Jinping, China's top leader, has moved to solidify his power. Changes to Chinese law mean he could rule longer than any leader since Mao.

For support, he has turned to the Mao-era beliefs in the importance of a cult of personality and the role of the Communist Party in everyday life. Technology gives him the power to make it happen.

"Reform and opening has already failed, but no one dares to say it," said the Chinese historian Zhang Lifan, citing China's four-decade post-Mao policy. "The current system has created severe social and economic segregation. So now the rulers use the taxpayers' money to monitor the taxpayers."

Mr. Xi has begun a major upgrade of the surveillance state. China has become the world's biggest market for security and surveillance technology, with analysts estimating the country will have almost 300 million cameras installed by 2020. Chinese buyers will snap up more than three-quarters of all servers designed to scan video footage for faces, predicts IHS Markit, a research firm. China's police will spend an additional $30 billion in the coming years on techno-enabled snooping, said one expert quoted in state media.

Government contracts are fueling research and development into technologies that track faces, clothing and even a person's gait. Experimental gadgets, like facial-recognition glasses, have begun to appear.

Judging public reaction can be difficult in a country where the news media is controlled by the government. Still, so far the average Chinese citizen appears to show little concern. The erratic enforcement of laws against everything from assault to speeding means the long arm of China's authoritarian government can feel remote from everyday life. As a result, many cheer on new attempts at law and order.

"It's one of the biggest intersections in the city," said Wang Fukang, a college student who volunteered as a guard at the crosswalk in Xiangyang. "It's important that it stays safe and orderly."

SURVEILLANCE START-UP

Start-ups often make a point of insisting that employees use their technology. In Shanghai, a company called Yitu has taken that to the extreme.

The halls of its offices are dotted with cameras, looking for faces. From desk to break room to exit, employees' paths are traced on a television screen with blue dotted lines. The monitor shows their comings and goings, all day, everyday.

In China, snooping is becoming big business. As the country spends heavily on surveillance, a new generation of start-ups has risen to meet the demand.

Chinese companies are developing globally competitive applications like image and voice recognition. Yitu took first place in a 2017 contest for facial recognition algorithms held by the United States government's Office of the Director of National Intelligence. A number of other Chinese companies scored well.

A technology boom in China is helping the government's surveillance ambitions. In sheer scale and investment, China rivals Silicon Valley. Between the government and eager investors, surveillance start-ups have access to plenty of money and other resources.

In May, the A.I. company SenseTime raised $620 million, giving it a valuation of about $4.5 billion. Yitu raised $200 million last month. Another rival, Megvii, raised $460 million from investors that included a state-backed fund created by China's top leadership.

At a building complex in Xiangyang, a facial-recognition system set up to let residents quickly through security gates adds to the police's collection of photos of local residents, according to local Chinese Communist Party officials.

"No matter which corner you escape to, we'll bring you to justice."

Wen Yangli, an executive at Number 1 Community, which makes the product, said the company is at work on other applications. One would detect when crowds of people are clashing. Another would allow the police to use virtual maps of buildings to find out who lives where.

A recent state-media propaganda film called "Amazing China" showed off a similar virtual map that provided the police with records of utility use, saying it could be used for predictive policing.

"If there are anomalies, the system sends an alert," a narrator says, as Chinese police officers pay a visit to an apartment with a record of erratic utility use. The film then quotes one of the officers: "No matter which corner you escape to, we'll bring you to justice."

GETTING CONFESSIONS

For technology to be effective, it doesn't always have to work. Take China's facial-recognition glasses.

The police in the central Chinese city of Zhengzhou recently showed off the specs at a high-speed rail station for state media and others. They snapped photos of a policewoman peering from behind the shaded lenses.

But the glasses work only if the target stands still for several seconds. They have been mostly used to check travelers for fake identifications.

China's national database of individuals it has flagged for watching — including suspected terrorists, criminals, drug traffickers, political activists and others — includes 20 million to 30 million people, said one technology executive who works closely with the government. That is too many people for today's facial recognition technology to parse, said the executive, who asked not to be identified because the information wasn't public.

Still, Chinese authorities who are generally mum about security have embarked on a campaign to persuade the country's people that the high-tech security state is already in place.

In Zhengzhou, the police were happy to explain how just the thought of the facial recognition glasses could get criminals to confess.

Mr. Shan, the Zhengzhou railway station deputy police chief, cited the time his department apprehended a suspected heroin smuggler. While questioning the suspect, Mr. Shan said, the police pulled out the glasses and told the man that what he said didn't matter. The glasses could give them all the information they needed.

"Because he was afraid of being found out by the advanced technology, he confessed," said Mr. Shan, adding that the man had swallowed 60 small packets of heroin. "We didn't even use any interrogation techniques," Mr. Shan said. "He simply gave it all up."

Carolyn Zhang contributed reporting from Zhengzhou.

GILLES SABRIÉ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Testing facial recognition software at Megvii, an artificial intelligence company in Beijing. China is the world's biggest market for security and surveillance technology.

Court shift was decades in the making

NEWS ANALYSIS
WASHINGTON

President's nominee puts conservatives on brink of a right-leaning majority

BY PETER BAKER

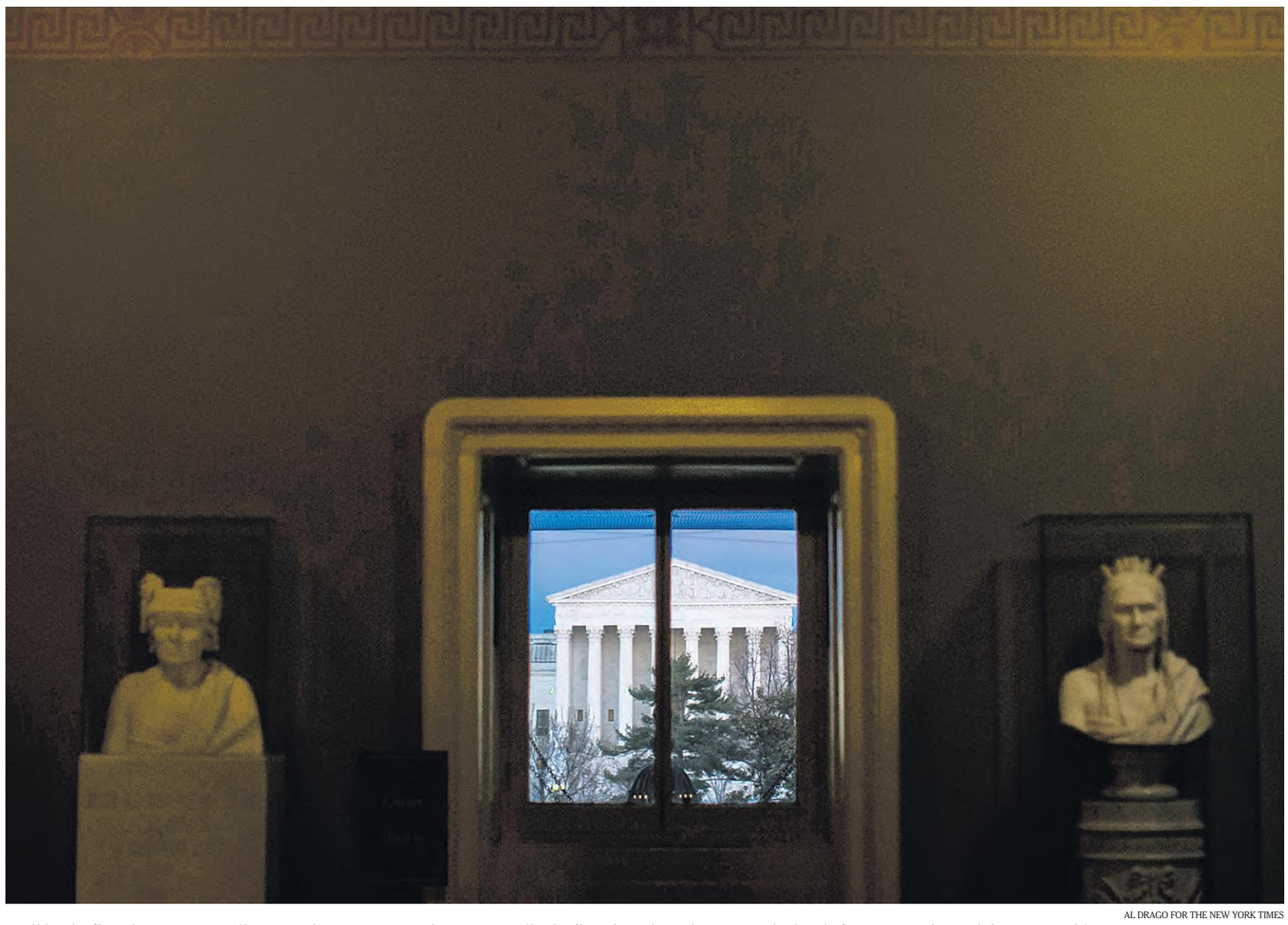
President Trump's selection of Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh for the Supreme Court culminates a three-decade project unparalleled in American history to install a reliable conservative majority on the nation's highest tribunal, one that could shape the direction of the law for years to come.

All of the years of vetting and grooming and lobbying and list-making by conservative legal figures frustrated by Republican appointees who drifted to the left arguably has come down to this moment, when they stand on the precipice of appointing a fifth justice who, they hope, will at last establish a bench firmly committed to their principles.

"They've been pushing back for 30 years, and, obviously, the announcement tonight is a big step in the right direction," said Curt Levey, the president of the Committee for Justice, a conservative activist group, who has been working toward this goal full time since 2005. "It'll be the first time we can really say we have a conservative court, really the first time since the 1930s."

This presumes that Mr. Trump can push Judge Kavanaugh's nomination through a closely divided Senate heading into a midterm election season, hardly a given. More than any nomination in a dozen years, Mr. Trump's choice of a successor for Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, the influential swing vote retiring at the end of the month, holds the potential of changing the balance of power rather than simply replacing a like-minded justice with a younger version.

That has raised the stakes for groups on the left and the right, guaranteeing an incendiary, ideological, partisan and well-financed confirmation battle in a capital already riven by incendiary, ideological, partisan and well-financed politics. Activists on both sides wasted no time on Monday night issuing their predictable full-throated endorsements or scathing condemnations within minutes of Mr. Trump's televised announcement.



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"It'll be the first time we can really say we have a conservative court, really the first time since the 1930s," the head of a conservative activist group said.

But if the president succeeds in confirming his selection, Judge Kavanaugh, who sits on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, is expected to join Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel A. Alito Jr. and Neil M. Gorsuch in forming a much more consistently conservative majority than before. The court has swung from left to right and back again throughout its history, of course, and other presidents tried to muscle their way to friendly majorities, most notoriously President Franklin D. Roosevelt's failed court-packing scheme in 1937. Never before, however, has an entire political apparatus arisen to systematically engineer a more dependable Supreme Court over the course of a generation.

Since the 1980s, a network of activists and organizations has worked assiduously to reach this point, determined to avoid the disappointment they felt after Republican appointees like Earl Warren, William J. Brennan Jr., David H. Souter, Sandra Day O'Connor and Justice Kennedy proved more moderate or liberal once they joined the court.

One of the leading figures behind the effort was Ed Meese, who served as attorney general to President Ronald Reagan, two of whose appointees, Justices O'Connor and Kennedy, proved less conservative than supporters originally hoped.

Mr. Meese has made it a mission since then to advise subsequent Republican presidents on judicial nominations. In a nod to his central role, Mr. Meese was present in the East Room of the White House for Monday night's announcement, and Mr. Trump singled him out during his speech.

Inspired by Mr. Meese, groups like the Federalist Society, the Heritage Foundation, the Judicial Crisis Network, the Judicial Action Group and Mr. Levey's Committee for Justice have for years sought to develop a new generation of younger legal conservatives who would go into government and fill out lower levels of the judiciary. "You have to have that army before you can credential them, and that army just didn't exist before Reagan," Mr. Levey said.

The idea was to vet and cull potential candidates for the Supreme Court long before vacancies even arose, so that Republican presidents could pick from rosters of would-be nominees whose records were known. No one wanted any more surprises.

"You're simply not going to get Souters anymore because no one will come up who nobody's interacted with," said Steven Teles, a professor at Johns Hopkins University and the author of "The Rise of the Conservative Legal Movement: The Battle for Control of the Law."

Indeed, the last time a Republican president even contemplated candidates from outside that known universe of conservative talent, he paid a price. President George W. Bush's nomination of Harriet E. Miers, his White House counsel and longtime adviser, collapsed in 2005 amid a full-fledged revolt by conservative activists who did not consider her one of their own.

Among those who argued against her nomination from within the White House? Judge Kavanaugh, who at the time was serving as Mr. Bush's staff secretary and participated in some of the private sessions preparing Ms. Miers for confirmation hearings, sessions that did not go well. Mr. Kavanaugh instead favored the selection of Justice Alito, then an appeals judge and a known and trusted figure within the conservative legal community. Justice Alito eventually got the nod after Ms. Miers withdrew.

Mr. Trump, whatever his other deviations from conservative orthodoxy, seemed to take a lesson from that. He has made it a top priority to restock lower-level courts with judges popular among legal conservatives, and for his two Supreme Court nominations stuck close to the options they presented to him. For Mr. Trump, it is an implicit bargain, a way of keeping his political base in his corner despite misgivings that many conservatives harbor over his other policies or various scandals.

The idea that Mr. Trump would pick from a list developed by conservatives has inflamed some Democrats, including Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, who declared that he would vote against Mr. Trump's nominee even before the choice was announced Monday night.

"Any judge on this list is fruit of a corrupt process straight from the D.C. swamp," Mr. Casey said in a statement.

The political left, naturally, has its own advocacy organizations and lists of favored candidates when Democratic presidents have Supreme Court vacancies to fill. For the most part, in fact, the four-member bloc of Democratic appointees on the court — Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan — has voted more in lock step than the Republican appointees.

But liberals lost their chance to solidify a left-leaning majority on the court when Senate Republicans refused to consider President Barack Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick B. Garland in 2016 after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, the court's conservative stalwart. That seat ultimately went to Justice Gorsuch, keeping it in the court's right-leaning faction.

If Judge Kavanaugh follows Mr. Gorsuch's example so far, Chief Justice Roberts may become the major swing vote. He has surprised, and disappointed, conservatives on occasion, most notably when he voted to uphold the constitutionality of Mr. Obama's health care program. But Chief Justice Roberts has been much more reliably conservative than Justice Kennedy.

Still, some longtime legal scholars said it would be a mistake to assume that Judge Kavanaugh's appointment would change the court fundamentally for the foreseeable future. "The possibility of drift is always there," Mr. Levey said. And if a Democrat were to win the White House in 2020, a conservative vacancy could still swing the court back.

"People say this will cement a conservative court for a generation," said Michael W. McConnell, a former appeals court judge who was considered for the Supreme Court by Mr. Bush. "I don't think that's true. The court goes back and forth and, personally, I think it's rather a good thing that the court have solid representations from both perspectives. This is a divided country."

A conservative stalwart in political fights and on the bench

WASHINGTON

Judge's rulings and hostility to government regulations have strong partisan appeal

BY ADAM LIPTAK

PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Left, President George W. Bush watched as Brett Kavanaugh was sworn in as a judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit by Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy in 2006. Judge Kavanaugh's wife, Ashley, held the Bible. Right, Judge Kavanaugh after President Trump announced his nomination on Monday.

Brett Michael Kavanaugh was just 38 when he was first nominated to a federal appeals court in Washington. But he had already participated in an extraordinary number of political controversies, attracting powerful patrons and critics along the way.

He served under Kenneth W. Starr, the independent counsel who investigated President Bill Clinton, examining the suicide of Vincent W. Foster Jr., the deputy White House counsel and drafting parts of the report that led to Mr. Clinton's impeachment. He worked on the 2000 Florida recount litigations that ended in a Supreme Court decision handing the presidency to George W. Bush. And he served as a White House lawyer and staff secretary to Mr. Bush, working on the selection of federal judges and legal issues arising from the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

He was "the Zelig of young Republican lawyers," Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York, said at Judge Kavanaugh's first confirmation hearing, in 2004. "If there has been a partisan political fight that needed a good lawyer in the last decade, Brett Kavanaugh was probably there."

But Judge Kavanaugh, 53, has also formed lifelong friendships with liberals, many of whom praise his intellect and civility. In his professional life, before he became a judge, he was often a moderating force.

Working for Mr. Starr, Judge Kavanaugh concluded that Mr. Foster had in fact killed himself. He opposed the public release of the narrative portions of Mr. Starr's report detailing Mr. Clinton's encounters with a White House intern. As staff secretary to Mr. Bush, he said in 2006, he strived to be "an honest broker for the president."

As a judge, though, he has been a conservative powerhouse, issuing around 300 opinions. His dissents have often led to Supreme Court appeals, and the justices have repeatedly embraced the positions set out in Judge Kavanaugh's opinions.

He has written countless decisions applauded by conservatives on topics including the Second Amendment, religious freedom and campaign finance. But they have particularly welcomed his vigorous opinions hostile to administrative agencies, a central concern of the modern conservative legal movement.

In a dissent in January from a decision upholding the structure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, he issued a ringing endorsement of executive power.

"To prevent tyranny and protect individual liberty, the framers of the Constitution separated the legislative, executive and judicial powers of the new national government," Judge Kavanaugh wrote. "To further safeguard liberty, the framers insisted upon accountability for the exercise of executive power. The framers lodged full responsibility for the executive power in a president of the United States, who is elected by and accountable to the people."

John G. Malcolm, a lawyer with the Heritage Foundation, a conservative group, said the decision was emblematic of a judicial career.

"He is a thoughtful, strategic judge who has, over time, moved the direction of the law in a conservative direction, and he has done it with scalpel-like precision," Mr. Malcolm said. "This is a conservative judge who has written textualist, originalist opinions in a whole host of areas."

Born in Washington, the son of two lawyers and the graduate of one of its elite private high schools, Georgetown Preparatory School, Judge Kavanaugh is in many ways a creature of the city Republicans like to deplore.

After seven years at Yale, where he went to college and law school, he returned to Washington for a varied career that included stints in the Justice Department, the independent counsel's office, a private law firm and the White House before joining the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Along the way, he married the former Ashley Estes, who served as personal secretary to Mr. Bush. They have two daughters.

"If there has been a partisan political fight that needed a good lawyer in the last decade, Brett Kavanaugh was probably there."

But people who have worked with Judge Kavanaugh say he has little use for Washington pomp. "Whatever the opposite of a Georgetown cocktail party person is, that's what Judge Kavanaugh is," said Justin Walker, a law professor at the University of Louisville who worked as a law clerk for both Judge Kavanaugh and Justice Anthony M. Kennedy. "He'd much rather have a beer and watch a hockey game."

"I never see him prouder," Professor Walker added, "than when I see him talk about coaching girls' basketball."

After law school, he served as a law clerk to three judges: Judge Walter Stapleton of the Third Circuit, in Philadelphia; Judge Alex Kozinski of the Ninth Circuit, in San Francisco; and Justice Kennedy, whom Judge Kavanaugh hopes to replace.

During that last clerkship, Judge Kavanaugh overlapped with a young Neil M. Gorsuch, who had been hired by a retired member of the court, Justice Byron White, and also worked part time in Justice Kennedy's chambers.

No Supreme Court justice has had more than one former law clerk join the court. If Judge Kavanaugh's nomination is successful, two of Justice Kennedy's clerks from a single term will serve together, probably for decades. Judge Kavanaugh also showed his loyalty to another former Kennedy clerk, Richard Cordray.

Before he joined the bench, Judge Kavanaugh made around $6,000 in contributions to political candidates, all but one of them Republican. The exception was Mr. Cordray, who received a $250 contribution for his unsuccessful 1998 campaign to become Ohio's attorney general and $1,000 for a failed bid in 2000 for the Senate. Mr. Cordray, who also worked with Judge Kavanaugh at Kirkland & Ellis, went on to become the director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the agency Judge Kavanaugh later voted against, and is now running for governor of Ohio.

Judge Kavanaugh's only appearance as a lawyer before the Supreme Court was an attempt to obtain the notes of a lawyer for Mr. Foster. He argued that the attorney-client privilege had ended when Mr. Foster committed suicide, and lost by a 6-to-3 vote.

Judge Kavanaugh wrote large parts of Mr. Starr's 1998 report to Congress, though he has said that he did not draft its narrative portion, which included many explicit details of Mr. Clinton's sexual encounters with a White House intern, Monica Lewinsky.

He has acknowledged authorship of parts of the report that suggested possible grounds for impeachment, including "areas where the president may have made false statements or otherwise obstructed justice." Some of those grounds have echoes in Robert S. Mueller III's investigation of Mr. Trump.

After the Clinton investigation and impeachment proceedings concluded but before Mr. Trump entered politics, Judge Kavanaugh came to have doubts about the wisdom of criminal investigations of sitting presidents.

"Whether the Constitution allows indictment of a sitting president is debatable," Judge Kavanaugh wrote in a 1998 law review article. His later work as an aide to Mr. Bush also helped shape his views, he wrote in another law review article.

He concluded that sitting presidents should not be distracted by civil suits or criminal proceedings. "A president who is concerned about an ongoing criminal investigation," he wrote, "is almost inevitably going to do a worse job as president."

Judge Kavanaugh said the proceedings could resume after a president left office and that impeachment remained an option.

Judge Kavanaugh's first nomination to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit stalled in the Senate, but he was confirmed after Mr. Bush renominated him in 2006.

The court is considered the second most important, but its docket is idiosyncratic and heavily weighted toward administrative law, which can be extraordinarily complex. In his opinions, Judge Kavanaugh has been skeptical of government regulations, notably in the area of environmental law, and he has argued in favor of greater judicial power in reviewing the actions of administrative agencies on major questions.

In 2011, Judge Kavanaugh dissented from a decision upholding President Barack Obama's health care law, but he did so on jurisdictional grounds.

At a 2016 argument over Mr. Obama's climate change regulations, Judge Kavanaugh indicated that environmental policy should be decided by Congress rather than the courts.

"The policy is laudable," he said. "The earth is warming. Humans are contributing. I understand the international impact and the problem of the commons. The pope's involved. And I understand the frustration with Congress."

But he added: "If Congress does this, they can account for the people who lose their jobs. If we do this, we can't."

He has also been open to using the First Amendment to strike down government regulations. Dissenting from the full District of Columbia Circuit's decision not to rehear a three-judge panel's decision upholding the Obama administration's "net neutrality" regulations, he said the government can no more tell internet service providers what content to carry than it can tell bookstores what books they can sell.

"The net neutrality rule is unlawful," he wrote, "because the rule impermissibly infringes on the internet service providers' editorial discretion."

Business

On the menu: A mouse and a keyboard

SAN FRANCISCO

Restaurants earn income as daytime work spaces before opening for dinner

BY NELLIE BOWLES

The bar at the Elite Cafe here was packed, but not a drink was being poured. The champagne stand sat empty and warm. The tap was covered in plastic wrap.

Instead, the restaurant was filled with the low din of typing. That's because the Elite Cafe, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. every weekday, is not exactly a restaurant anymore and certainly not a bar. It is a co-working space.

Everything is now a co-working space, one of those shared offices popular with freelancers, employees of small companies and others who want a change of scenery. Coffee shops are co-working spaces. Gyms are co-working spaces. Social clubs are co-working spaces. And now restaurants — but only before dinnertime.

The company that laid the extension cords and power strips across Elite Cafe's copper tables is called Spacious. Since it was started two years ago, Spacious has converted 25 upscale restaurants in New York and San Francisco into weekday work spaces. Membership, which allows entry into any location, is $99 a month for a year, or $129 by the month. With $9 million in venture capital it received in May, Spacious plans to expand this year to up to 100 spaces.

A restaurant makes for the perfect conversion, the Spacious team argues. Bars become standing desks. Booths become conference rooms. The lighting tends to be nicer, less harsh and fluorescent, than lighting at an office, and the music makes for a nice ambience.

Originally, the founders of Spacious thought they would have to sell restaurateurs on the idea. Instead, restaurants, struggling in America to pay rent and wages and frustrated with disappointing lunch traffic, are coming to them, eager to strike deals for a slice of the membership dues. Only 5 percent have made the cut to become Spacious spaces, said the company, which is unprofitable.

Spacious is part of a broader debate over how to use spaces in cities as people increasingly buy items online instead of in stores and as labor costs make restaurants an even more challenging proposition. A membership model is the future for bricks-and-mortar spots, according to the Spacious team, and restaurants are the easiest first step.

"Actively consuming isn't what we want to do with the space in our neighborhoods anymore," said Chris Smothers, 30, a Spacious co-founder and its chief technology officer. "Retail spaces are designed for you to come in, make a transaction and get out, and that's why you feel weird in a coffee shop all day, because all of these spaces are designed for you to leave."

The zoning implications of what Spacious is doing are unclear. Can a restaurant just become an office during the day?

"Somebody would have to make the case that we are an office — and I think that's a pretty heavy burden of proof," said Preston Pesek, 39, a co-founder and the chief executive of Spacious, who previously worked in commercial real estate investing. "What really is the definition of an office? A business conversation can happen anywhere. A phone is a computer."

He is hoping some linguistic adjustments help. "We're trying not to use the word co-working because of some of the zoning issues," Mr. Pesek said. "We prefer the term drop-in work space."

Andrew Rudansky, a spokesman for New York City's Department of Buildings, said the use of restaurants as co-working spaces was permitted, as long as the businesses primarily operated as restaurants. The department would investigate any complaints that they were no longer mainly eating and drinking establishments, he said.

San Francisco's Planning Department did not return requests for comment.

The first Spacious, in 2016, was the hip bistro DBGB Kitchen and Bar in New York, which closed last year. The restaurant's management had set the tables for dinner each night before closing, and all day the tables had sat fully ready. Members of the Spacious team asked to be trained in how to lay the tables — they would do it themselves after their co-working clients were done.

"We set 180 place settings a day," Mr. Smothers said.

Spacious's founding team originally met in New York through a shared interest in yoga.

"I'm into raja yoga, and Preston's into ashtanga, and a friend said, 'You guys are both into real estate,'" Mr. Smothers said.

They met their chief operating officer, Jaclyn Pascocello, who was a general manager at the Hillstone Restaurant Group, after she heard about the project through mutual friends while on a yoga retreat in Puerto Rico. Their first plan was to use hotel rooms while the occupants were out for the day. They designed convertible furniture to hide the hotel bed and made plans for a concept building.

Then they realized there was a simpler space to manage: restaurants.

Ms. Pascocello, 30, says that the trick to making a better co-working space is to run it as if it were a restaurant.

"We take guest notes," she said. "The goal is to know everyone's name, know what they're working on, know if they're sensitive to noise, how they like coffee, the milk options."

Restaurateurs said that as many of their colleagues faced financial struggles, there was less stigma around sharing their space. They give Spacious a set of keys, and the start-up opens it in the morning, brews coffee and has its own staff host at the door.

Justin Sievers, 34, the managing partner of Bar Primi in Lower Manhattan, saw Spacious operating at a restaurant nearby. With lunch traffic low, he said, he decided to be "inventive" and reached out to the start-up to make Bar Primi a co-working space during the day.

"It's not what we want our space to be, and there is a little bit of this negative connotation of 'O.K., we're a restaurant, but we have to now sell out a little bit of our dining room for all these laptops?'" Mr. Sievers said. Now he is less worried about how it looks.

"Laptops used to send the message that we're failing as a restaurant," he said. "But that's changing."

Some Spacious locations have become almost neighborhood living rooms. Samantha Moretti, managing partner at the Milling Room on New York's Upper West Side, was surprised to find people knitting and holding after-school homework sessions when she went in before opening for dinner.

On a recent afternoon, Mr. Smothers and Ms. Pascocello visited Crave Fishbar in Midtown East, which is a Spacious space during the day. Crave's host that day was Dave Wilson, 25, who was a bartender before managing this brood of pop-up office workers.

"They're more low maintenance," he said of his new customers.

Around 4 p.m., restaurant staff arrive to set up the dining room. A text goes out announcing last call for coffee and that the power cords are being pulled up.

There's no branding aside from a sandwich board on the sidewalk. One-third of the members join Spacious after just wandering by one. The founders want the space to look like the restaurant and for no two spaces to have anything in common except one thing.

"The coffee is always to the left of the water," Ms. Pascocello said. "If you walk in and it's to the right, we've failed."

Back at the Elite Cafe in San Francisco, the workday was in full swing.

"In cafes, you can't have a computer and sit there for eight hours," said Tanya Cheng, 39, who works in e-commerce and had a laptop, a keyboard, a mouse and a tablet set up. She works in Spacious spaces every day and said they had changed her relationship to the restaurants. "When I go to dinner, I avoid these places now," Ms. Cheng said, with a laugh. "It's work for me."

Jeff Bernstein, a venture and capital markets adviser, said the setup was more inherently social than a co-working office. At least once a week, he stays after the workday and has drinks with someone from the space.

"You can get immersed in your stuff, or you can notice somebody doing something interesting three stools away and you can chat with them," he said. "Because you're at a bar."

In a nearby booth were Justin Morgan, 38, an information technology director at the cannabis company Sparc, who sat across from his partner, James Landau, 40, a product manager. Both said they liked that Spacious was not a traditional co-working space, like a WeWork, which costs significantly more and has perks including beer, table tennis, evening socials and (for a little extra) summer camp.

"Have you ever worked from home five days a week straight?" Mr. Morgan asked. "It's terrible."

An older man in a suit came into Elite Cafe and asked to be seated. The host told him that it was closed for diners right now and was a co-working space. He looked at the full restaurant, a little confused, and turned around.

A minute later, a young couple entered with a stroller and shopping bags and requested the menu. There was no lunch, the host explained again. Just co-working.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAM HODGSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The start-up Spacious has turned 25 restaurants, including the Milling Room in Manhattan, top, into a co-working space during the day. Above right, restaurant booths make for comfortable desks, with lighting less harsh than that in an office. Above left, Spacious provides water and coffee, aiming to treat members with cafe-like care.

"Retail spaces are designed for you to come in, make a transaction and get out, and that's why you feel weird in a coffee shop all day."

Faded gambling resort sees future in sports betting

ATLANTIC CITY

Casinos light up again, as a new income source opens for Atlantic City

BY PATRICK MCGEEHAN AND JOHN TAGGART

The last time there was so much hype about the future of this troubled seaside resort, Donald J. Trump was doing most of the hyping.

The president, then a casino impresario, opened the Trump Taj Mahal, the biggest gambling venue on the boardwalk, with great fanfare and at a cost of $1.2 billion in 1990, only to have it collapse into bankruptcy the following year. After years of decline, it shut down in 2016, seemingly consigned to symbolize the ruinous excess here during the Trump era.

But last month, less than two years later, the old Taj, stripped of its faux minarets, concrete elephants and any evidence of the Trump name, reopened as the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. On the same day, June 28, another failed casino — the epically disastrous Revel — was reanimated a short stroll up the boardwalk as the Ocean Resort. These revivals occurred just as New Jersey's casinos were scrambling to cash in on another way of separating gamblers from their savings: wagering on sporting events. The Borgata casino started taking bets on sports on June 14 and others, including the Ocean Resort, are rushing to install sports books in prominent spots on their casino floors. Adding a popular form of gambling could help draw customers during the dreary winter months.

Altogether, it adds up to more opportunity than many people who live and work here could have imagined just a few bleak years ago, when five of the city's 12 casinos failed and a state takeover rescued the city from a bankruptcy filing.

Though this once famous gambling mecca still has far to go to reverse its fortunes, some boosters are already painting a rosy picture.

"All around us we get glimpses of Atlantic City's future, as new buildings rise and old streets get new life breathed into them," Gov. Philip D. Murphy, a Democrat, told a lunchtime crowd at a recent gambling conference in the city. "Not long ago — it was not long ago at all — folks were writing Atlantic City off. It was past its prime. The economy was dead. Now, when people speak of Atlantic City, they speak of renewal, they speak of opportunity."

MARK MAKELA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Trump Taj Mahal in 2016, the year it shut down in Atlantic City. The site has been revived as the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino.

New Jersey became the second state — Nevada was the first — with a legal casino when Resorts International opened on the boardwalk in 1978. But a gambling license has not always been a sure thing. In a race to cash in, Mr. Trump and his competitors often borrowed more than they could pay back.

At one point, this small city had 13 casinos, three of them controlled by Mr. Trump. But each of his properties fell into bankruptcy and he eventually withdrew from the business. Caesars Entertainment, which still owns three casinos, was saddled with about $25 billion in debt before it went into bankruptcy in 2015.

Given the city's record, not everyone has been won over by pledges from casino executives and elected officials to make Atlantic City a more family-oriented resort. The same promises have been made for decades, yet the city has remained dependent on gamblers even though it long ago lost its status as the only place in the United States that welcomed them outside of Las Vegas. The countryside is now dotted with casinos, including several within a short drive.

After Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and New York made casinos legal, those states drained a large share of Atlantic City's lifeblood. What was once a stream of more than $5 billion in annual revenue has been cut in half and not even the most hopeful investors expect a full rebound.

"Do I think the gaming market ever comes back to close to $6 billion in revenue? No. Not even close," said Jim Allen, the chief executive of Hard Rock International.

But still, his company and its local partners, the Jingoli and Morris families, have invested more than half a billion dollars to turn the shuttered Taj Mahal into a resort that emphasizes live music and entertainment. Hard Rock's read on consumer sentiment is that people are rooting for Atlantic City to succeed but they think that it had "lost its way," Mr. Allen said.

The latest round of investment in casinos on the boardwalk, he said, is a watershed for the city.

"If a brand like Hard Rock fails in Atlantic City, the interest in investing capital in that town is going to diminish significantly," Mr. Allen said. "However, if we are successful, then I think the future is very bright in Atlantic City."

As for tapping into sports gambling, Mr. Allen said the Hard Rock was preparing to announce a partnership with a company that would run a sports book in the new casino. He said he expected sports bets to provide a modest lift to the casinos' profits and to draw people in during big events like the Super Bowl.

"It is another positive thing happening," he said. "It is another reason to go to Atlantic City."

The owners of the newest casino on the Boardwalk, Ocean Resort, are making a bigger wager on sports betting. They are turning a bar at the center of the casino floor into a sports book that

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New income source for Atlantic City

REVIVAL, FROM PAGE 6

will serve as a place for fans to watch games as well as bet on them.

"Coming from Nevada, it's hard to even imagine a casino without a sports book," said Seth Schorr, an adviser to Bruce Deifik, the casino's chairman. In Nevada, the only place in the country where betting on sports was legal until recently, about $4.8 billion was wagered on sports last year and casinos kept about $250 million, according to the UNLV Center for Gaming Research.

"You have to have an exciting environment to watch the game. Our goal is to create experiences," Mr. Schorr said.

One lawmaker who pushed for New Jersey to legalize sports betting, the now-former state senator Raymond Lesniak, a Democrat, pointed out that the big weekends in sports betting occur during months when the casinos are much quieter.

"Atlantic City does fine during the summer, but off-season, it's starving," said Mr. Lesniak. "During the N.C.A.A. tournament, Super Bowl week, any big event, you can't get a room in Las Vegas and Atlantic City is a ghost town. That changes with sports betting."

Indeed, the prospect of filling what were once slow weekends is the real hope among Atlantic City casino operators, rather than the potential tax revenue sports wagering would yield for the state or the city. Moody's estimated that New Jersey's casinos could take in about $125 million annually on sports bets, less than 5 percent of what the seven remaining casinos saw last year. They also earn revenue as the exclusive purveyors of online gambling in the state.

As soon as the Borgata started taking bets on sports, it had a billboard announcing the new gambling outside the Lincoln Tunnel in New Jersey. "We feel like the vibrancy this type of offering will create will extend beyond just the race and sports book and spill out onto the rest of the property," said Marcus Glover, the president and chief operating officer of the Borgata.

Mr. Deifik, the owner of Ocean Resort, predicted that sports betting would keep more gamblers in the region. "Instead of getting on a plane and going five hours to Las Vegas from the East Coast and New Jersey, people will stay here," he said.

The bigger uncertainty about Atlantic City is what the reopening of two big casinos will mean for the market. Will they attract a significant number of new customers to the city or simply cannibalize the weaker competitors?

Resorts made a profit of less than $3 million last year, compared with more than $80 million for the Borgata, according to the state Division of Gaming Enforcement. Bally's, one of the three owned by Caesars, had a profit of about $8 million in 2017.

JOHN TAGGART FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The beach in Atlantic City. The casinos are hoping that wagering on sporting events could help draw customers during the dreary winter months.

Despite the city's tattered history, Joseph Jingoli is brimming with optimism. A politically connected builder, Mr. Jingoli's company rehabilitated the old Taj and is constructing a complex in Atlantic City that will be home to a campus of Stockton University and the relocated offices of South Jersey Gas, a utility.

"We've been watching this market," he said, referring to himself and his partner, Jack Morris, a developer. "We think now's the time."

As evidence of Atlantic City's resilience, Mr. Jingoli mentioned some entrepreneurs who are making investments of their own. Deborah and Mark Pellegrino quit their jobs in the hospitality industry and sank about $200,000 into Made, a chocolate-making business with a small bar attached half a block from the boardwalk.

Flanked by sacks of cocoa beans from Madagascar and other faraway places, Ms. Pellegrino said some casinos have shifted what had been their longstanding attitude — they have stopped discouraging customers from venturing outside their walls and exploring the city.

"I think there's a new audience and they want a new experience," she said.

With a full schedule of concerts booked — ranging from Frankie Valli to Pitbull — the Hard Rock is banking on entertainers to attract a wave of younger, more curious visitors, Mr. Jingoli said. "We're here to grow the market."

Some longtime casino customers are less ebullient. Sitting on a bench between Ocean Resort and the beach, Marjorie Parker, who lives in Brooklyn, the New York City borough, sounded skeptical.

"They've got a lot of work to do," Ms. Parker, a retired Citibank employee, said. Wearing a lanyard that held membership cards to several casinos, Ms. Parker recalled visiting the Borgata the day it opened 15 years ago. She said she had returned only two or three times.

She said she preferred less ornate places like Bally's, where she said she could stay two nights for as little as $50 after riding a bus from the Port Authority in Manhattan. Asked what the new casinos could do to attract low-rollers like herself, Ms. Parker advised them to be more generous.

"People want to win," she said. "They don't want to lose all their money."

But in a city where so many have struggled for so long, the new casinos are already improving lives. In preparation for its debut, the Hard Rock hired more than 3,000 people, at least 800 of whom had worked at the Taj. Dora Brooks, 58, and Mary Martinez, 62, were there when the biggest union, Local 54 of Unite Here, went on strike in 2016 and hastened the Taj's demise.

"It was very depressing," Ms. Brooks said. "My heart was just broken in two."

An Atlantic City native, she said she had been personally offended by all the talk of her hometown's tailspin. "When people talk about Atlantic City, I feel like they're talking about me," Ms. Brooks said.

Ms. Martinez, who has lived in Atlantic City for 15 years, said she had not expected to land another full-time job in a casino, but she never lost hope.

"I never saw it as a downward spiral," she said. "I always thought of Atlantic City as a little, bright shining star."

Nick Corasaniti and Rick Rojas contributed reporting.

Last straw for plastic in drinks at Starbucks

Company sets deadline of 2020 to stop its use in most cold beverages

BY CHRISTINA CARON

Starbucks will stop using disposable plastic straws by 2020, eliminating more than one billion straws a year, the retailer has announced.

Instead, Starbucks, which has more than 28,000 stores worldwide, will use recyclable, strawless lids on most of its iced drinks. The Frappuccino is the exception: It will have a straw made from either paper or compostable plastic.

The plastic straw, a once ubiquitous accessory for frosty summer drinks and sugary sodas, has been falling out of favor in recent years, faced with a growing backlash over its effect on the environment.

In the United States alone, it is estimated that more than 500 million disposable plastic straws are used every day, according to Eco-Cycle, a nonprofit recycling organization. Although plastic straws are made from polypropylene, a recyclable plastic, most recyclers won't accept them.

"Plastic straws are pretty small and lightweight, so when they're going through the mechanical sorter, they're often lost or diverted," said Sam Athey, a plastics pollution researcher and member of the Plastic Ocean Project, a nonprofit organization based in Wilmington, N.C., that aims to reduce plastic use.

That means plastic straws get tossed in the garbage, ending up in landfills and polluting the ocean.

It takes "about 200 years for polypropylene plastic straws to break down under normal environmental conditions," Ms. Athey said.

During that time, the plastic becomes brittle and breaks into smaller and smaller pieces, called microplastics, which can be eaten by organisms, she added.

STARBUCKS

Starbucks said switching to cold-cup lids would eliminate a billion straws a year.

Further complicating matters, when the plastics break down, their surface area to volume ratio increases, Ms. Athey said, "so they have the ability to attract and absorb more pollutants like" bisphenol A, an industrial chemical that is a known endocrine disrupter.

It is difficult to know how many straws or straw particles end up in the world's waterways and oceans, but plastic straws are one of the most common items found on beaches, according to the Ocean Conservancy, whose volunteers have picked up more than nine million straws and stirrers from beaches and waterways.

The movement to ban single-use straws has gained traction via the work of nonprofits, lawmakers and online campaigns like Stop Sucking and the Last Plastic Straw, not to mention a graphic 2015 video, viewed on YouTube more than 30 million times, that showed marine biologists pulling a straw out of a sea turtle's nose.

And it shows no sign of slowing down.

In Los Angeles, a Kickstarter campaign to develop "the world's first collapsible, reusable straw" has already drawn $1.9 million in contributions, and a documentary called "Straws," now screening across the United States, examines the problems caused by plastic pollution. The theme of this year's Earth Day was ending plastic pollution; one of the goals is to eliminate single-use plastics.

This month, Seattle, the headquarters of Starbucks, became one of the first major cities in the United States to ban single-use plastic straws. Several cities in Florida and California have banned or partially banned the straws, and state officials in California are considering a measure that would prevent restaurants from handing out plastic straws unless requested by a customer.

In areas where plastic straws are not already banned or limited, businesses like SeaWorld, McDonald's and Alaska Airlines are taking some measures to reduce their use.

Starbucks earned $22.4 billion in annual revenue last year, making it one of the largest businesses to announce it would eliminate plastic straws.

"By nature, the straw isn't recyclable and the lid is, so we feel this decision is more sustainable and more socially responsible," Chris Milne, director of packaging sourcing for Starbucks, said in a statement on Monday.

So far, the new cold-cup lids have debuted in more than 8,000 stores in the United States and Canada and will be in stores worldwide by 2020.

New HBO owner wants more, faster

BY EDMUND LEE
AND JOHN KOBLIN

Change is coming to HBO, now that it is part of the AT&T corporate family. That much was clear to the 150 employees who attended a recent town hall meeting at the network's headquarters in Midtown Manhattan.

The main speaker was John Stankey, a longtime AT&T executive who now oversees HBO in his new role as chief executive of Warner Media. During a straight-shooting, hourlong talk, a recording of which was obtained by The New York Times, he laid out his rough vision for the network and warned his audience that the months ahead would not be easy.

"It's going to be a tough year," Mr. Stankey said. "It's going to be a lot of work to alter and change direction a little bit."

AT&T executives said all the right things during the long prelude to the company's $85.4 billion acquisition of Time Warner, which was completed last month. They acknowledged that the corporate culture of a Dallas-based telecommunications giant was different from that of the more freewheeling media and entertainment concerns in New York and California. They pledged to take a hands-off approach to the company's crown jewel, HBO, which has won endless Emmys while generating billions in profits.

But the town hall meeting suggested that AT&T would not be a passive corporate parent.

Richard Plepler, HBO's gregarious and urbane chief executive, hosted the talk at the cozy HBO Theater on the building's 15th floor. Mr. Stankey's appearance came as part of a tour that included stops at Warner Bros. and Turner, the media properties that were once part of Time Warner and now belong to AT&T's Warner Media division.

Mr. Plepler, 58, and Mr. Stankey, 55, sat angled slightly toward each other on the modest stage. During the conversation, which began at noon on June 19, Mr. Stankey never uttered the word "Netflix," but he did suggest that HBO would have to become more like a streaming giant to thrive in the new media landscape.

Mr. Stankey described a future in which HBO would substantially increase its subscriber base and the number of hours that viewers spend watching its shows. To pull it off, the network will have to come up with more content, transforming itself from a boutique operation, with a focus on its signature Sunday night lineup, into something bigger and broader.

"We need hours a day," Mr. Stankey said, referring to the time viewers spend watching HBO programs. "It's not hours a week, and it's not hours a month. We need hours a day. You are competing with devices that sit in people's hands that capture their attention every 15 minutes."

Continuing the theme, he added: "I want more hours of engagement. Why are more hours of engagement important? Because you get more data and information about a customer that then allows you to do things like monetize through alternate models of advertising as well as subscriptions, which I think is very important to play in tomorrow's world."

Known for "The Sopranos," "Game of Thrones" and "Westworld," HBO has long favored quality over quantity. Its high-gloss productions often take years to develop and can cost millions per episode. That approach has won the network more Primetime Emmy Awards than any of its competitors over the last 16 years, with Mr. Plepler the master curator.

In recent years, Mr. Plepler has emphasized HBO's "bespoke culture" and its enduring appeal to A-list producers and stars at a time when Netflix, Amazon and Apple have bottomless budgets. On his watch, "Big Little Lies" has brought the Oscar winners Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman and Meryl Streep to the network, and shows like "Barry" and "Insecure" have charmed critics.

But during the town hall meeting, Mr. Stankey said HBO should consider trying something new.

"As I step back and think about what's unique about the brand and where it needs to go, there's got to be a little more depth to it, there's got to be more frequent engagement," Mr. Stankey said. Bringing the point home, he added that HBO must "build that brand so that it's broad enough to make that happen."

Mr. Plepler tried to pin down Mr. Stankey on the question of how much AT&T planned to invest. Without specifying any certain amount, Mr. Stankey said, "I do believe there needs to be stepped-up investment."

Mr. Plepler interjected: "Let's give him a hand for that simple sentence! That simple sentence deserves a hand!"

"Also," Mr. Stankey said, "we've got to make money at the end of the day, right?"

KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

John Stankey, left, a longtime AT&T executive who now oversees HBO in his new role as chief executive of Warner Media, and Jeff Bewkes, his predecessor in the role.

"We do that," Mr. Plepler responded, to scattered applause.

"Yes, you do," Mr. Stankey said. "Just not enough."

"Oh, now, now, be careful," Mr. Plepler said.

HBO has, in fact, been a consistent moneymaker. Over the last three years, while allocating more than $2 billion a year to its programming, the network has made nearly $6 billion in profit. But if it is to compete with upstart rivals like Netflix, which plans to lay out some $8 billion this year, its level of spending must increase considerably.

"There's got to be a little more depth to it."

"We well understand that we played the best hand we could with the hand we had," Mr. Plepler said. "And we well understand that that is not going to be sustainable going forward."

Mr. Stankey also said that the network's number of subscribers — 40 million in the United States, out of 142 million worldwide — was not going to cut it. HBO will have to find a way "to move beyond 35 to 40 percent penetration to have this become a much more common product," he said, referring to its current market size. At the same time, he acknowledged that HBO has commanded deep loyalty: "You've earned the dynamic amongst your customer base that when you put a new piece of content out there, people will try it, just because they trust you're going to be putting something in front of them that they might like. We now need to figure out how to expand the aperture of it without losing the quality."

Representatives for the network and Warner Media declined to comment for this article.

To make a bigger, broader HBO, while also guarding its distinctive identity, the two executives will have to find a way to work together despite their differences.

Mr. Plepler, who joined HBO in 1992, is a showman, garrulous and inquisitive. He and his wife, Lisa, have entertained heads of state, authors and movie stars at their Upper East Side townhouse. Born and raised in Connecticut, and very much at ease among the power players of New York, Washington and Hollywood, Mr. Plepler has deep ties to the Democratic Party.

The California-born Mr. Stankey, who lives in Texas and has donated to a number of Republican campaigns, cuts a lower profile. He started his telecommunications career at Pacific Bell in 1985 and has served in various roles at AT&T, including chief technology officer and head of the company's DirecTV unit. On the stage of the HBO Theater, he described himself as a "Bell-head," a term that was probably lost on the people in the seats.

During the talk, Mr. Plepler seemed willing to make changes. "I've said, 'More is not better, only better is better,' because that was the hand we had," he said, as Mr. Stankey looked on. "I've switched that, now that you're here, to: 'More isn't better, only better is better — but we need a lot more to be even better.' "

Mr. Stankey's experience at AT&T — which offers two streaming services, DirecTV Now and WatchTV — has given him a deep familiarity with the recent shift in how media is distributed. He warned that there would be only so many streaming companies in the future. If HBO would like to end up as a heavyweight in the industry, he said, it would be wise to add "other types of content" to what is available on its standalone streaming service, HBO Now.

He also made the case that HBO's employees should consider themselves fortunate to have AT&T as their new corporate parent, rather than a company in the same business.

"The good news for many of you in this organization is that it's not Fox or Disney sitting up on this stage now," Mr. Stankey said. "There's virtually no duplication with AT&T in what we do."

In other words, your jobs are safe.

But he cautioned that HBO's employees would notice a change in tempo and metabolism in the days ahead. "I suspect if we're in a situation where we're going to be investing heavier, that means that there's going to be more work for all of you to do — and you're going to be working a little bit harder," Mr. Stankey said.

After comparing the next 12 months to a "dog year," he invoked another metaphor. "You will work very hard, and this next year will — my wife hates it when I say this — feel like childbirth," he said. "You'll look back on it and be very fond of it, but it's not going to feel great while you're in the middle of it. She says, 'What do you know about this?' I just observe, 'Honey. We love our kids.' "

Mr. Stankey also said he was starting to get used to the media glare that has gone along with his new, high-profile job. When he mentioned that the newspapers have lately shown an interest in his personal life, Mr. Plepler cut him off.

"You're now in the entertainment business, John," he said. "There are no secrets."

Opinion

The Finlandization of the United States

Trump's ideological sympathies lie more with Putin than with America's allies.

Roger Cohen

PETE GAMLEN

MADRID Over the next week, President Trump will visit Europe to call on allies, get in some golf and then meet President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki. He'll no doubt feel more comfortable with the Russian leader, whom he considers "fine," than with freeloading NATO partners who, he says, treat Americans as "schmucks."

If the issue were purely mercantile — European allies don't pay enough for their defense — it might be manageable, even salutary. It's not. Trump's ideological sympathies lie with Putin's autocracy and its democratic veneer. He's in the Putin camp against the Western liberal democracy of, say, Angela Merkel in Germany. Trump's a paid-up member of the growing illiberal authoritarian international movement.

The Finlandization of Trump's United States is pretty much complete. Trump won't oppose Putin's Russia under any circumstances. In some way, it's worse than Finlandization. Trump's not neutral, as Finland was during the Cold War. He leans Moscow, but is still offset to some degree by the honorable Americans of the State Department and the Pentagon.

To fail to see this is to invite disaster. Trump is not an unusual American president with contrarian ideas. He is an off-the-charts repudiation of everything the United States has stood for since 1945: representative government, liberty, the rule of law, free trade, a rules-based international order, open societies, pluralism and human rights.

He refuses to see that as freedom and stability spread, undergirded by NATO and the European Union, American prosperity grew. For him, the European Union was "set up to take advantage" of the United States — a preposterous charge.

Traveling from Madrid to beautiful Segovia the other day, in a line of traffic full of Spaniards fleeing the capital for the weekend, I gazed out on a wealthy country. Spain was poor and under a dictatorship a little more than four decades ago.

That's what the European Union does. It's a transformative peace magnet delivering democratic stability and prosperity to more than a half-billion people. That's why the United States has always supported it.

A European who visited Trump recently tells me he was shocked by two things: the president's venom against European allies that don't buy enough American goods even as they ask the United States to protect them, and his paean to the new xenophobic Italian government that, in Trump's view, is finally getting with the anti-immigrant program.

There is no talking the president out of his views, this visitor reports, say by mentioning the European contribution to the war in Afghanistan or the fact that the United States is the union's biggest trading partner. No, Trump just knows.

If you told him a plane falls out of the sky when it runs out of fuel, and the president's gut told him otherwise, he'd stick to his line. His eyes would glaze over as you tried to persuade him otherwise.

Trump's with Matteo Salvini, the Italian interior minister from the anti-immigrant League party. He's with Viktor Orban, the Hungarian prime minister who is successfully exporting across Europe his illiberal template for a closed democracy that can produce only one election result. This is Europe's new strategic reality.

The NATO summit in Brussels could be a fiasco, like last month's Group of 7 meeting in Canada. Trump might express an indulgent view of Putin's annexation of Crimea. He might say he won't honor Article 5 of the NATO treaty (the obligation of all NATO members to defend one another if one is attacked) for countries that don't pay enough. Or he might just be on his best behavior.

Whatever he does, European allies have no doubts: The trust that is the ultimate bond of any alliance has been broken by Trump. Europe needs to stand up for itself and the values Trump tramples.

The question remains: Why is Trump in Putin's thrall? He may be compromised, whether by Russian intelligence or money. He's certainly drawn to Putin's bare-chested strongman style. Russia is not taking advantage of the United States on trade, Trump believes, but he is convinced China and the European Union are. Russia is anti-NATO and anti-E.U., exactly like Trump, and for similar reasons. They both want to disaggregate the union. Why? Because they want to deal with small European nations, and so be better placed to bully them.

These are the sympathies behind Trump's push to get Russia back into the G-7 and his willingness to contemplate recognizing Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, even as he won't discuss Russian interference in the 2016 American presidential election.

European peace since 1945 has depended on acceptance of the principle that the presence of national minorities in other countries — in this case, ethnic Russians in Ukraine — is not a pretext for war or annexation. Putin flouted that twice, in eastern Ukraine and Crimea. If Trump blinks, all bets are off.

"Nothing," Jake Sullivan, a former senior foreign policy adviser to Hillary Clinton and national security adviser to Joe Biden, said when asked what he hoped for out of the Helsinki summit. I agree. Nothing would be good when giveaways on Crimea or a compromised NATO are the alternative. The Finlandized must be grateful for small mercies.

Deporting the American dream

We talked to hundreds of people sent to Mexico. They haven't given up on their hopes for a better life.

Anita Isaacs
Anne Preston

MEXICO CITY To hear the Trump administration talk about the immigrants it has deported back to Mexico, you would think they were all criminals and potential drains on the nation's economy and welfare system, with no interest in participating in what used to be called the American dream.

In fact, none of that is true. We know, because the two of us talked to hundreds of them.

Over the last few weeks we were in Mexico, beginning an oral history project documenting the migrant experience. Over the course of three weeks our team surveyed and interviewed more than 200 returning Mexican migrants, the vast majority of them deportees. Some were caught in roadblocks. Others were pulled over for running a stop light or for speeding. They were detained in American county jails and immigration detention centers before being sent to Mexico. Many had lived in the United States almost their entire lives.

And yet, despite that experience, when we asked them what they missed about the United States, their responses were automatic: "everything." "I feel American," they told us over and over again. And why wouldn't they? They grew up as the kids next door. They went to our children's schools and birthday parties. They attended our churches, played on our sports teams. As high schoolers they flipped hamburgers at McDonald's.

But they also always had it a little rougher. Occasionally they faced discrimination. Their parents worked multiple jobs, often seven days a week. They left home before their children woke up and returned long after they were asleep. Children as young as 8 shouldered the burdens of caring for younger siblings. They began working as soon as they reached high school. But their unauthorized status limited their job opportunities; they couldn't get a driver's license and college was a remote possibility. Some got into the same kind of trouble native-born children do, but most worked hard to keep their families afloat.

Still, the American dream meant everything to them. In optimistic terms rarely heard from native-born Americans, they described the United States as a place where success was possible. Whether they lived in a big city or small town, in a red state or a blue state, they overwhelmingly recall an American society that was genuine, open, diverse and accepting.

One man teared up remembering his childhood friend, Matthew, with whom he played baseball, swam in the neighborhood pool and shared tacos and mac and cheese. Another missed ice fishing on frozen Minnesota lakes, using snowmobiles fashioned with special drills that he helped assemble through his work at a fiberglass factory. He shared another memory: After introducing his friends to guacamole, they insisted on eating at his place. "We had an arrangement: They'd bring the avocados," he'd make the dip.

A young woman recalled being terrified of having her friends discover her unauthorized status. When she finally found the courage to tell them, they reassured her that they couldn't care less, and laughingly nicknamed her the "alien."

Each deportee stressed the kindness of ordinary Americans who lent a helping hand. Bosses who gave them a chance, appreciated their hard work, mentored their success. Teachers whose names are etched in their memories: Mr. McDonald, Mrs. Wilson, Miss Annie — all went the extra mile to help them succeed in school. Coaches made it possible for them to play on club soccer or mighty mites football teams by paying their dues and buying them the uniforms their parents couldn't afford. A young man cried, remembering the marine who helped him find his way as a troubled adolescent.

MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

A man in Tijuana, Mexico, who was deported after having lived in America since age 5.

Back in Mexico, these returning migrants are desperately struggling to find their place in a foreign country. One young woman returning from Fort Myers, Fla., said, "I didn't even know what Mexican earth was like and whether the sun shone."

The returnees stand out. They dress differently, they think differently, they speak broken Spanish and they dream in English. They miss everyday American life and its special occasions. They long for American food, rattling off every conceivable American chain restaurant. Several insist that Mexican tacos couldn't begin to compete with Taco Bell. They are American football fans rather than soccer aficionados. A handful confess they aren't following the World Cup because the United States didn't qualify.

They can still proudly recite the Pledge of Allegiance and sing the United States national anthem. They loved observing United States holidays and several still do even back in Mexico. On Thanksgiving they expressed gratitude for opportunities the United States provided them. On July 4, they celebrated a country where "everyone praises each other's successes."

They reminisce about living in a country governed by the rule of law. Our survey asks them whether they were fearful of United States authorities. Except for the newest deportees who experienced the recent crackdowns, respondents react with a quizzical look, followed by an almost universal "no." They surprise themselves with their answers, because as undocumented migrants they had every reason to be fearful. Yet the vast majority contrast the crime, corruption and lawlessness that pervades Mexico with the safety they felt in the United States, a place they describe as one "where police can't be bribed," "where people obey rules" and "where kids can play safely outside."

Separated from their families and friends, many live immersed in childhood memories. Others, like Israel Concha, the director of New Comienzos, an organization of returning migrants with which we collaborated, have become activists committed to bringing the American dream to Mexico. They enact practices and values they acquired in the United States, notably volunteerism, a custom foreign to many Mexicans but "something we all learned to do in the United States," Mr. Concha explains.

We watched these volunteer workers reach out to the scores of returning Mexican migrants who pass through their doors every day. They are always welcoming and upbeat. They encourage those who feel isolated to join their team. They link those who suffer depression with counseling centers. They provide clothing to the destitute, accompany battered women to shelters and help returning migrants find job training and work opportunities.

These memories of migrant life in the United States stand in stark contrast to the inhumane crackdown simultaneously unfolding at the border. The returning migrants we met are products of an American society that is forgetting its identity. In a cruel irony, organizations like New Comienzos are importing to Mexico the American values of mutual respect, open-mindedness and generosity their volunteers were raised with. Meanwhile, American children are growing up in a society where aggression, prejudice and turning a blind eye to human suffering are increasingly condoned.

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OPINION

The New York Times
INTERNATIONAL EDITION

GOOD RIDDANCE, BORIS JOHNSON

His resignation could make it easier for Theresa May to reach a more reasonable agreement on Brexit.

Britain's foreign secretary and its chief Brexit negotiator caused quite a stir when they resigned within 24 hours because they considered Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit proposal too accommodating to Europe. But if her government weathers the resulting storm, their departures could help resolve the tortuous divorce negotiations with the European Union, which are approaching crucial deadlines.

This crisis took shape after Mrs. May summoned her ministers to her official retreat at Chequers on Friday and hammered out what she called a "responsible and credible" proposal far short of the clean break she previously mooted.

Not surprisingly, Mrs. May's chief Brexit negotiator, David Davis, a proponent of a "hard Brexit," quit on Sunday, along with his deputy. The greater shock came on Monday, when the flamboyant foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, followed suit.

The resignations immediately set off speculation about more defections, the potential fall of Mrs. May's government and even new elections. All that could happen. But it is doubtful that hard-line Brexiteers in Mrs. May's Conservative Party can muster the 48 votes that party rules require to force a vote of confidence, much less the votes needed to force her into a leadership contest (in which Mr. Johnson would be a potential candidate).

Deliberately or not, therefore, Mrs. May called the hard-liners' bluff at Chequers. Now if she survives the ensuing storm, she will no longer have to please Tories who ideologically oppose adherence to all of the union's laws and regulations. That does not mean an agreement with the union is imminent or easy. Mrs. May's new package is still far from anything the union can accept. And the hard-liners will not relent.

Yet an injection of common sense is welcome in a political fray that has defied all warnings, many of them from industries, of the enormous damage that would come from a break with the European Union, and especially of an abrupt and uncontrolled break. It raised the possibility of an extension of the Brexit deadline, and, among ardent opponents of a break, even hopes of a new referendum (rejected, for now, by Mrs. May).

"I can only regret that the idea of #Brexit has not left with Davis and Johnson," tweeted Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council. "But . . . who knows?" A slight uptick in financial markets suggested a similar glimmer of hope.

WHY BREAST-FEEDING SCARES TRUMP

It comes down to public health abroad could hurt American companies' profits.

The push by United States delegates to the World Health Organization to water down or scrap a simple resolution meant to encourage breast-feeding in underdeveloped countries was many things — bullying, anti-science, pro-industry, anti-public health and shortsighted, to name a few.

But it was not surprising. In fact, it's just one of several recent examples of the administration's zeal for badgering weaker countries into tossing public health concerns aside to serve powerful business interests. The baby formula industry is worth $70 billion and, as breast-feeding has become more popular in more developed countries, it has pinned its hopes for growth on developing ones.

As The Times reported Sunday, the resolution in question stated, simply, that breast milk is the healthiest option for infants, and that steps should be taken to minimize inaccurate marketing of substitutes.

President Trump's contention on Twitter Monday, that women need access to formula because of malnutrition, defies both science and common sense: the overwhelming balance of evidence tells us that breast milk is the most nutritious option for infants, by far.

Unethical marketing practices on the part of formula makers is a longstanding and well-established problem that has contributed to a decline in breast-feeding in low-income countries. As of 2015, less than 40 percent of babies younger than six months old were being breast-fed in developing countries. Doubling that proportion could save hundreds of thousands of lives.

Of course, for certain families, formula can be essential. But it is also nutritionally inferior to breast milk in every way. Among other things, it contains none of the antibodies available in a mother's milk. In the developing world, those shortcomings can be far more devastating to a child's health.

Ecuador was set to introduce this uncontroversial measure when the United States threatened "punishing trade measures" and a withdrawal of crucial military aid unless the country dropped it.

Common sense ultimately triumphed in this round of bullying, and the measure passed without much alteration — thanks, oddly enough, to Russia. But American officials are using the same tactics in other, similar situations, and there's still concern that they could succeed on those fronts.

Should American officials prevail in the current case, the outcome will be easy enough to guess: People will suffer. Industry profits will not.

The Russia watcher's dilemma

Keith Gessen

REBECCA BLACKWELL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

A subway car in Moscow, where more than 20 new stations have been opened since 2009.

Russia has been in the news a lot lately. You may have noticed. It invaded Ukraine, doped the Russian Olympic team, meddled in the American elections and apparently released a deadly nerve agent in the English countryside.

On top of all that, it seems to have cast a spell on our otherwise supercilious president, Donald Trump, causing him to throw caution to the wind and set up a one-on-one meeting with President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, Finland, this month.

For someone like me, who has been writing and thinking about Russia for most of my life, the past few years have made for a strange experience. I read the news like everyone else and am horrified. Then I visit Russia and find myself conflicted and confused.

I was born in Moscow in 1975, in what was then the Soviet Union, and came to the United States with my family when I was 6 years old. We moved to the Boston area and lived with some friends from back home, the Moshkeviches. Then, with some help from a local charity, we were able to rent a place of our own.

My parents loved Russian culture, Russian literature, Russian films, but they did not like Russia, at least as it was then. They did love America — for its freedom and its plenty. People we knew told the story of the Soviet immigrant who burst into tears the first time she saw an American supermarket with its mind-boggling abundance. They did not tell the story to laugh at the immigrant; they told it because they felt the same way. How could a place have so many brands of mayonnaise? So many different fruits? So many kids' cereals?

As for me, I wanted to fit in. Month by month, year by year, I shed my Russianness; as Chekhov once said about his serf parentage, I squeezed my Russianness out of myself drop by drop. My parents had left, and that was that. We were Americans now.

My mother died of cancer when I was a senior in high school. She was a literary critic who focused on Russian literature and had been in our family the person most attached to Russia. Her death could easily have severed our Russian connection; instead, for me, it did the opposite. I decided as a college freshman to take classes in Russian history and literature as a way of staying connected to her somehow. I was going to do it for a semester and then move on. This was the early 1990s, just after the Soviet Union collapsed; getting a spot in the Russian history and literature seminar was not exactly difficult.

But instead of moving on, I stayed. Before I knew it, I was off to Russia for my junior year abroad. As soon as I graduated, I started writing about Russian culture and politics and translating Russian texts.

It seemed I had arrived too late. By the time I started publishing on Russia, the Boris Yeltsin era had collapsed in ignominy and Mr. Yeltsin himself had been replaced by a small gray ghoul named Vladimir Putin. Interest in Russia declined, then cratered. For years the only reliable way to sell an article about Russia was to focus on someone who had been killed or arrested, or to find some other creative way of underscoring how evil Mr. Putin was.

I remember an editor emailing me in 2009 to ask if there was any truth to the story that Mr. Putin preferred Dostoyevsky to Tolstoy. I was perplexed. A quick Google search revealed that a desperate colleague had, in fact, produced an article about how the Tolstoy estate at Yasnaya Polyana was being neglected, surely the result of some nefarious Putinist plot.

The heightened focus on my native country was good for business. So why did I feel so bad?

And then, in 2014, Russian forces invaded Crimea. Interest in Russia soared. After the 2016 election, it soared even further.

That was depressing. It was depressing because the Russian invasion of Ukraine led to thousands of deaths, and it was also depressing because of what Russia would now inevitably become: a pariah among nations, locking itself into Fortress Russia, fearing the world around it.

I was depressed, too, by the news coverage in the United States, especially postelection. It almost entirely neglected the long history of American meddling in the internal affairs of many, many countries, including Russia itself. Some of it was perfectly understandable anger at Russia's role, however marginal, in electing Mr. Trump; but much of the Russia talk threatened to crowd out an examination of all the other reasons Mr. Trump was elected.

As for me, as a Russia watcher, it was good for business. At the university where I teach, I got the green light for a new class on Russia, and students even signed up. This would not have happened a few years earlier. So why did I feel so bad about the whole thing?

Perhaps it is simply this: Having lived in Russia, I know in my bones how complicated a place it is. Living in Russia is not a nonstop exercise in getting arrested, tortured, shot. People go about their lives. They buy groceries, look at their phones, go on dates, get married. They go to work in the morning, look for parking, try to get to the gym. They tell jokes. And in the meantime, yes, people are getting arrested; some are being tortured; some are being killed.

In Moscow last spring, I experienced this cognitive dissonance all over again. I hadn't been there in a few years, and I was surprised by the changes I saw. There were many more subway stations — since 2009, the city has opened more than 20 new stations. In that same time, New York, to great fanfare, has opened three.

There were numerous new coffee shops, affordable small restaurants and people bustling about. No one would mistake it for Paris, but still, the city would have been barely recognizable to someone transported there from, say, 1998.

At the same time, as soon as you turned on the television, there it was: total paranoia about NATO bombers; aggressive, ill-informed arguments about geopolitics; bad movies about World War II. The political atmosphere is poisonous. Mr. Putin is in charge for six more years and has convinced himself and those around him that the country would collapse if he left. Russia has entered another dark period in its history, and there is no end in sight.

But if there's one thing we have learned in the past year and a half of the Trump presidency, it's that people do not exist in the political atmosphere constantly, or even most of the time. On Facebook and Twitter they may; while watching cable news they do. The rest of the time, though, most of us are able to do other things.

That's not necessarily good — in times of emergency, it's bad. But it can't be an emergency all the time, not even in Mr. Trump's America, not even in Mr. Putin's Russia. There are many aspects of Russian life, Russian thought, even Russian politics, that are not under the purview of Vladimir Putin.

So what is it like for a longtime Russia watcher? I guess it's like having your favorite obscure band become famous for some stupid act, like destroying a hotel room — the hotel room being, in this case, the postwar global order. But I don't know. I never really had a favorite obscure band. Russia was the closest thing I had to an obscure interest. I was a fan of their early albums — "Late Socialism," "Perestroika," "Deindustrialization" — but everyone listens to them now.

KEITH GESSEN *is the author, most recently, of the novel "A Terrible Country."*

A liberal's case for Brett Kavanaugh

Akhil Reed Amar

The nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to be the next United States Supreme Court justice is President Trump's finest hour, his classiest move. Last week the president promised to select "someone with impeccable credentials, great intellect, unbiased judgment, and deep reverence for the laws and Constitution of the United States." In picking Judge Kavanaugh, he has done just that.

In 2016, I strongly supported Hillary Clinton for president as well as President Barack Obama's nominee for the Supreme Court, Judge Merrick Garland. But today, with the exception of the current justices and Judge Garland, it is hard to name anyone with judicial credentials as strong as those of Judge Kavanaugh. He sits on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit (the most influential circuit court) and commands wide and deep respect among scholars, lawyers and jurists.

Judge Kavanaugh, who is 53, has already helped decide hundreds of cases concerning a broad range of difficult issues. Good appellate judges faithfully follow the Supreme Court; great ones influence and help steer it. Several of Judge Kavanaugh's most important ideas and arguments — such as his powerful defense of presidential authority to oversee federal bureaucrats and his skepticism about newfangled attacks on the property rights of criminal defendants — have found their way into Supreme Court opinions.

Except for Judge Garland, no one has sent more of his law clerks to clerk for the justices of the Supreme Court than Judge Kavanaugh has. And his clerks have clerked for justices across the ideological spectrum.

Most judges are not scholars or even serious readers of scholarship. Judge Kavanaugh, by contrast, has taught courses at leading law schools and published notable law review articles. More important, he is an avid consumer of legal scholarship. He reads and learns. And he reads scholars from across the political spectrum. (Disclosure: I was one of Judge Kavanaugh's professors when he was a student at Yale Law School.)

It is hard to name anyone else to the U.S. Supreme Court with such strong judicial credentials.

This studiousness is especially important for a jurist like Judge Kavanaugh, who prioritizes the Constitution's original meaning. A judge who seeks merely to follow precedent can simply read previous judicial opinions. But an "originalist" judge — who also cares about what the Constitution meant when its words were ratified in 1788 or when amendments were enacted — cannot do all the historical and conceptual legwork on his or her own.

Judge Kavanaugh seems to appreciate this fact, whereas Justice Antonin Scalia, a fellow originalist, did not read enough history and was especially weak on the history of the Reconstruction amendments and the 20th-century amendments.

A great judge also admits and learns from past mistakes. Here, too, Judge Kavanaugh has already shown flashes of greatness, admirably confessing that some of the views he held 20 years ago as a young lawyer — including his crabbed understandings of the presidency when he was working for the Whitewater independent counsel, Kenneth Starr — were erroneous.

SCOTT J. FERRELL/CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Judge Brett Kavanaugh is President Trump's nominee for the Supreme Court.

Although Democrats are still fuming about Judge Garland's failed nomination, the hard truth is that they control neither the presidency nor the Senate; they have limited options. Still, they could try to sour the hearings by attacking Judge Kavanaugh and looking to complicate the proceedings whenever possible.

This would be a mistake. Judge Kavanaugh is, again, a superb nominee. So I propose that the Democrats offer the following compromise: Each Senate Democrat will pledge either to vote yes for Judge Kavanaugh's confirmation — or, if voting no, to first publicly name at least two clearly better candidates whom a Republican president might realistically have nominated instead (not an easy task). In exchange for this act of good will, Democrats will insist that Judge Kavanaugh answer all fair questions at his confirmation hearing.

Fair questions would include inquiries not just about Judge Kavanaugh's past writings and activities but also about how he believes various past notable judicial cases (such as Roe v. Wade) should have been decided — and even about what his current legal views are on any issue, general or specific.

Everyone would have to understand that in honestly answering, Judge Kavanaugh would not be making a pledge — a pledge would be a violation of judicial independence. In the future, he would of course be free to change his mind if confronted with new arguments or new facts, or even if he merely comes to see a matter differently with the weight of judgment on his shoulders. But honest discussions of one's current legal views are entirely proper, and without them confirmation hearings are largely pointless.

The compromise I'm proposing would depart from recent confirmation practice. But the current confirmation process is badly broken, alternating between rubber stamps and witch hunts. My proposal would enable each constitutional actor to once again play its proper constitutional role: The Senate could become a venue for serious constitutional conversation, and the nominee could demonstrate his or her consummate legal skill. And equally important: Judge Kavanaugh could be confirmed with the ninetysomething Senate votes he deserves, rather than the fiftysomething votes he is likely to get.

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OPINION

Democracy wins in Mexico

Ioan Grillo
Contributing Writer

MEXICO CITY In the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, Emigdio López, a candidate for the local legislature for the leftist Morena party, was in his last hours of campaigning when he was ambushed. Firing from a distance into his truck, assassins killed Mr. López instantly along with four of his campaign officials; their bullet-ridden corpses were found slumped in the crashed vehicle. A fellow party member, Flavio Sosa, said the killings showed "a perverse interest to sow fear so that people don't go out to vote."

Mr. López's slaying was part of a wave of at least 145 political killings leading up to elections last week, according to a count by the political consulting firm Etellekt. With very few arrests it is unclear who is behind the murders, whether drug cartels or shady political operators. But the effect was to create an atmosphere of fear around the election for governors, mayors and legislators as well as the presidency.

That fear, however, was overcome by the tens of millions of Mexicans who peacefully cast their votes on July 1, with long lines at many polling places. Turnout was 63 percent, according to the country's electoral institute — eight points higher than for the 2016 presidential vote in the United States. For Mexico, it was a victory of ballots over bullets.

The election result itself also marks an important step on Mexico's rocky road of democracy. The winner, Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Morena, will become the first real leftist in the presidency since the 1930s, signaling a switch in direction after decades of governments pursuing center-right economic policies. Many of his supporters believed that fraud would stop him from taking office, in the same way Mr. López Obrador claimed he was robbed of the presidency when he first ran in 2006. But when the authorities quickly confirmed his victory by more than 30 points it proved such fears wrong. This should restore much confidence in the electoral system.

The quick and graceful concessions by his main rivals, the governing party's José Antonio Meade and the center-right Ricardo Anaya, were also encouraging. Perhaps they have established a new tradition in Mexico, where candidates have often failed to recognize defeat.

JULIO CESAR AGUILAR/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

A supporter of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico City last week.

This boost to Mexico's institutions comes amid a tough time for democracy elsewhere in Latin America. As Venezuela continues its economic meltdown it has become increasingly authoritarian; its May vote to re-elect the leftist President Nicolás Maduro was rejected by much of the international community. In Honduras, the right-wing President Juan Orlando Hernández was accused of rigging elections in November; dozens of people who protested his victory were killed by security forces. Nicaragua is on the verge of civil war, with more than 200 killed in political violence in recent months amid calls for the former guerrilla Daniel Ortega to leave the presidential palace.

The election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador represents an important step for the country.

These developments show that the struggle for democracy in the region is not one of left versus right. Strongmen come from both sides, while some of the most advanced democracies, such as Uruguay and Chile, have been governed by both the left and right in recent years. Nor is there a simple battle of populism against liberal democracies. Some nations that are said to have had populist leaders, such as Argentina, have alternated power peacefully, whereas others without them, such as Honduras, have not. The tricky reality is that it is tough to make generalizations across the continent.

In Mexico, Mr. López Obrador calls himself a leftist but rejects the populist label, which he says academics cannot define. "They don't even know what populism is," he said at a rally in the town of Actopan. "They fail to define it conceptually."

Some political theorists say populism is not an ideology but a political logic, which pits an idea of the people against the idea of an elite. In this sense, both Mr. López Obrador and President Trump do criticize elites. But they also have such different backgrounds, careers and policies that it is misguided to describe Mr. López Obrador as Mexico's version of Mr. Trump. Mr. López Obrador needs to be judged on his own record.

To be sure, Mexico's democracy still has deep problems. It is one of the most murderous countries in the world for journalists, making parts of the country black holes for information. Governors have been accused of skimming billions of dollars from public treasuries and even of becoming active drug traffickers, while corrupt policemen working with drug cartels have been involved in brutal massacres.

It is such conditions that made so many voters turn away from established parties and to Mr. López Obrador, and he now has the herculean task of trying to resolve these problems. In his first speech after the results came in, he said he would do this while respecting democracy. "We are not looking to build a dictatorship, either open or covered up," he said.

Mexico needs to make sure he keeps this pledge, and builds on his huge victory so that the nation becomes one of the democratic lights of Latin America and not one of its authoritarian black holes.

IOAN GRILLO *is the author of "Gangster Warlords: Drug Dollars, Killing Fields, and the New Politics of Latin America."*

After Kavanaugh, the deluge

Ross Douthat

In the second year of his presidency, Donald Trump has become more and more willing to act Trumpishly rather than deferring to the official wisdom of his party. But with his second Supreme Court nomination, notwithstanding all the head-fakes and reality-television atmospherics, Trump has demonstrated that he'll take his Trumpishness only so far. It's one thing to blow up the G-7 with trade wars and make nice with a murderous North Korean despot; it's quite another to disappoint the D.C. conservative legal establishment. So instead of the dark horses who caught his eye or the female rising star his base and some noisy columnists kept touting, he circled back to the best-known, deepest-resumed, most-vouched-for choice, and gave us Judge Brett Kavanaugh as the nominee.

Establishment choices tend to yield swift confirmations when your party controls the Senate, and assuming that no Lovecraftian horror lurks in his extensive paper trail, I would expect Kavanaugh to be confirmed narrowly but easily, with some skeptical abortion-related questions but little ultimate resistance from Republican Senators Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski. Because an important part of that paper trail was printed working under Kenneth Starr and George W. Bush, I would also expect some of the vulnerable Senate Democrats to feel more comfortable voting against him, citing his pro-business rulings and partisan political history, than they might have been against Amy Coney Barrett, whose higher-risk but higher-political-reward nomination the Trump White House decided to eschew.

So expect a party-line vote or close to that to replace Justice Anthony Kennedy with Kavanaugh, and then expect a court that moves to the right in some sense, but not necessarily in the most predictable of ways. Kennedy was famous for his swing votes, but he sided with the liberals only on a particular set of (yes, hot-button) cases, and Chief Justice John Roberts has been willing to play the swing vote in his own consensus-oriented, restraint-prioritizing way. So if Kavanaugh is even somewhat Roberts-esque (as his detractors on the right have feared) in his approach, you could end up with a court that is more conservative but also more cautious than the Kennedy-era court, which had a swing justice more likely to go all-in for whichever side he swung toward.

And then even if Kavanaugh proves aggressive (and his appellate record suggests he might be), and even if he frequently joins Clarence Thomas on the court's right flank, it's easy to imagine the prudent Roberts becoming still more cautious and consensus-oriented in response. Which is why the wisest take on the overall direction of the Supremes is the one that concludes Jack Goldsmith's recent analysis in The Weekly Standard: If you're expecting a broad "conservative revolution" as opposed to a gentle rightward drift, it will take "a sixth or seventh conservative justice" to deliver it.

The promises the conservative legal movement made to the pro-life voters are about to come due.

But of course neither the liberals most panicked by Kennedy's retirement nor the conservatives who voted for Trump almost exclusively because of judicial nominations are focused on the general drift of the court; they're focused on those hot-button cases where Kennedy advanced the causes of social liberalism, and on abortion above all. And here Kavanaugh's elevation does promise to be a watershed — for the wider culture war if he (and Roberts) join Justices Thomas and Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch to overturn Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey, and for internal Republican Party politics if he (or Roberts) imitate Kennedy and save abortion rights instead.

There will be time to discuss the first potential watershed, the possible post-Roe-Casey political landscape, in the months to come. But the second one is worth discussing briefly now, because the Kavanaugh appointment brings us to a testing moment for the conservative legal movement's political promise, delivered to social conservatives for years and decades now, that judges formed by its philosophy and principles would necessarily vote to overturn the post-1973 abortion regime and return the abortion debate to the democratic process.

Without that promise the current Republican coalition would not exist; without it the Federalist Society and all its intellectually impressive work wouldn't have millions of voters in its corner. And at the heart of the promise is a pledge that what happened in Casey, when three Republican-appointed jurists limited Roe's ambit but basically upheld its vision, will never happen again — so long as pro-lifers trust the process, trust originalist and textualist theory, trust the hyper-qualified candidates the conservative legal movement puts forward.

I think abortion opponents will have that trust vindicated; I think a Roberts-Kavanaugh court, however restrained in other ways, will overrule Casey and allow the states to legislate freely on abortion once again. But this is not the view of many savvy court-watchers, many legal conservatives included, who expect at most a gradual widening of the room for second-trimester regulation. And if they're right and I'm wrong, if another Republican appointee writes another opinion that limits but still preserves a constitutional right to terminate unborn human lives, then the party unity that I expect around the Kavanaugh nomination will never be repeated, rebellions and disillusionment will divide the right's legal coalition, and pro-life voters will never trust the legal establishment's promises again.

The groundswell for Barrett, unusual in a nomination process, was a foretaste of what the rebellions would look like. And it's one indicator of a larger truth: One way or another, after Brett Kavanaugh, the politics of abortion will never be the same.

In Pakistan, Sharif fights for survival

NASIR, FROM PAGE 1

country's history where the superrich and powerful have been held to account. Opinion polls show Mr. Sharif's party marginally ahead of Mr. Khan's party.

To investigate the allegations against Mr. Sharif and his family arising from the Panama Papers, the Supreme Court set up a team in April 2017, which curiously included officials from Pakistan's powerful intelligence agencies, Inter-Services Intelligence and Military Intelligence.

Last July, the Supreme Court disqualified Mr. Sharif from holding public office because of a misdeclaration. He was found not to have declared a salary he could receive but never actually did from a job in a firm owned by his son in Dubai. The Sharifs believe that the Supreme Court judgment and the convictions last week were driven by pressure from the military and that the judges were helpless.

Mr. Sharif and his daughter appeared dozens of times before the anticorruption court, which made their presence at every hearing mandatory. They sought exemption from appearing in person several times as Mr. Sharif's wife, Kulsoom Nawaz, was found to have cancer last year and was being treated at a hospital in London. She had a heart attack last month and has been on life support since.

Pakistan's political polarization is so intense and the decline of civility so acute that supporters of Mr. Khan's P.T.I. described Mrs. Sharif's medical condition as a "political drama" to avoid accountability and generate sympathy before the elections.

Mr. Sharif and his daughter intend to appeal their convictions in higher courts and seek bail. The interim law minister has said that they will be arrested at the airport on arrival in Lahore.

It isn't clear whether the military will permit supporters to assemble in any significant numbers at the airport and risk clashes. The main road from the city to the airport passes through a huge military base.

Mr. Sharif and his daughter also need to manage the power struggles within their party. Shahbaz Sharif, the younger brother of Mr. Sharif, who was the chief minister of Punjab, has been running the P.M.L.-N.'s electoral campaign.

He has always advocated avoiding confrontation with the military establishment and the judiciary, and is campaigning primarily on the record of his party's governance. He has a reputation as an able administrator who delivered developmental projects on time. But he lacks the charisma and the mass support that Nawaz and Maryam Sharif have.

Concrete political and economic questions in Pakistan have often been overshadowed by charisma and slogans.

And their rival, Mr. Khan, is not hesitating from trying to win support from religious extremists. Last year religious groups besieged Islamabad, the capital, and accused Mr. Sharif's government of blasphemy for changing the wording of an oath for legislators that dealt with a declaration of the Islamic belief that the Prophet Muhammad was the final prophet.

Mr. Sharif's government described the change as a "clerical error" and reversed it. Mr. Khan, who has been trying to please religious extremists, accused Mr. Sharif's party of having tried to change the wording of the oath to appease a "foreign lobby." He repeated the reference recently in a speech.

Concrete political and economic questions in Pakistan have often been overshadowed by charisma and slogans. Mr. Sharif and his daughter seem prepared to rally the crowds to vote for their party — neither can run for office as they have been disqualified by the courts — by deploying rhetoric and emotion, even if they have to do that from prison cells.

The Sharifs have framed it as the battle for civilian supremacy and democratic values.

It is an ironic state of affairs, especially because Mr. Sharif began his political career as a protégé of Gen. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq in 1980. He amassed most of his fortune under the military's watchful eye when he was being propped up to undermine Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her party in the 1980s and 1990s.

The refrain of a famous poem by Habib Jalib, a great Pakistani poet, saluting Ms. Bhutto's battles with the military said "Dartay hain bandooqon waley ek nehatti ladki se," or "The men with the guns are scared of an unarmed girl." A defiant Maryam Nawaz recently recited that sentence in a reference to her own troubles with the military.

While the country's other three provinces — Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, earlier known as the North-West Frontier Province — have a history of defying central authority and of standing up to the military, Punjab has seldom betrayed such tendencies. This is possibly because it is heavily represented in the military.

Mr. Sharif is the first popular leader from Punjab to defy the military. The big question is, will Mr. Sharif and his daughter's confrontation win over the electorate in Punjab, or will Punjab follow the directions from the military establishment? What is clear is that the political turmoil is bound to continue even after the election results are declared.

ABBAS NASIR *is a columnist and former editor of Dawn, the leading English-language newspaper in Pakistan.*

Sports

Order — or chaos — on the path to glory

On Soccer

BY RORY SMITH

REBECCA BLACKWELL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Croatia's goalkeeper, Danijel Subasic, cradling the ball after making a save against Russia in the World Cup quarterfinals. Croatia will play England in the semifinals on Wednesday.

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA As with every one of these journeys that is transformed by hindsight into a road map, Belgium's route to the World Cup semifinals started out in bitter disappointment.

Twenty years ago, the country sent an industrious, unremarkable team to France for the 1998 tournament. Belgium did not lose a game, but its three draws — with the Netherlands, Mexico and South Korea — were not enough to escape the group. It was hardly a grand humiliation, but it was enough to convince the Belgian soccer authorities that something had to change.

And so they set out to transform the way Belgium produced soccer players. They spent years studying how the country trained its young stars, comparing the experiences those players had with those of their peers at the top clubs Barcelona and Ajax, soccer's gold standard for youth development.

They identified where they were failing and drew up a blueprint to address it. A national soccer center was constructed in Tubize, not far from the border with France. Methods at club academies were overhauled, a squadron of coaches trained, specialist schools opened.

It took less than a decade for a generation of talented teenagers to began to emerge: first, players like Jan Vertonghen, Toby Alderweireld and Axel Witsel, followed quickly by Kevin De Bruyne, Romelu Lukaku and Eden Hazard.

Suddenly, Belgium was a case study. National associations all over Europe — and farther afield — wanted to find out how it had been done.

Though the details were different, adapted for Belgium's specific circumstances, the basic outline was the same as it was for Germany, for Spain, for France — for all those countries that have followed such a path.

Germany won the World Cup in 2014, thanks to a program instituted in the late 1990s, when the national team was at its lowest moment.

Spain's 2010 triumph was rooted in an overhaul, particularly of Barcelona's youth system, a couple of decades previously. France established its national training center at Clairefontaine in 1988 and won its first World Cup 10 years later.

Should Roberto Martínez's team beat France here in St. Petersburg on Tuesday, and then England or Croatia in the final in Moscow on Sunday, the road map would be complete. Belgium would not just be world champion, it would be the smallest nation to wear that crown since Uruguay in 1950. It would be a beacon to others, proof that smaller nations can compete with the superpowers, a paradigm of how to make the most of comparatively little.

As Belgium was crashing out at the group stage 20 years ago, Croatia was on its way to the semifinals.

It was the country's first trip to the finals as an independent nation; what that team achieved has remained the benchmark for every group of players in its wake.

"We had this famous generation, and now we are close to them," defender Vedran Corluka said. "We are in the semifinal again, after 20 years. That is something special in our country."

In many ways, Croatia's story is even more remarkable than Belgium's. Croatia has a population of just four million, and many members of its current team grew up during, or in the immediate aftermath of, the bloody, internecine war that accompanied the collapse of Yugoslavia. That it has twice come so close in the years since independence is, by any standard, extraordinary.

Yet nobody invites representatives of the Croatian Football Association to explain the secrets of their success. As countries like Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy pick over their various failures at or before this World Cup, none will talk about the need to follow the Croatian model, to find their own Luka Modric and Ivan Rakitic and Mateo Kovacic.

There is a good reason for that: Croatian soccer is in a state of near-permanent chaos. Two players — Modric, the captain, and Dejan Lovren, a defender — have been accused of perjury in the case of Zdravko Mamic, the former president of the Croatian club Dinamo Zagreb. For years, Mamic ran the country's soccer program as his own personal fief; in June, he was sentenced to six and a half years in prison for embezzlement and tax fraud.

There is no road map here. There is no state-of-the-art facility to gather the very best young players in Zagreb and Split and Dubrovnik. Croatia's place in the World Cup semifinals is not the natural conclusion of an intelligent, long-term project.

For those tasked with finding a way to consistently produce outstanding young players, it is much more difficult to put the same question to Croatia. What can be taken from the Croatian model? That sometimes exceptionally gifted players emerge because of the challenges they face, not despite them; that truly transcendent talent, like that of Modric, does not require immaculate training fields or a perfectly plotted development pathway to shine; that, sometimes, there is no order in the chaos.

Besides, there is perhaps a greater truth in Croatia's origin myth than there is in Belgium's. De Bruyne was unlikely to win many friends at his country's association when he offered his own explanation for how this generation came together: "Because we were given the chance to play in other countries," he said.

It is soccer's open market, its porous borders and, most of all, its glorious arbitrariness that explain best why Belgium and Croatia were in the semifinals when bigger, richer nations have long since departed. That is the lesson both can teach those nations that see in them a map to be followed, a blueprint to be adopted: that sometimes, there is no signal. Occasionally, it is just noise.

YURI KOCHETKOV/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

The official World Cup poster depicts Lev Yashin, considered the best goalkeeper in history. His fame crossed the Iron Curtain.

An enigmatic soccer history

MOSCOW

Full image of Soviet heroes is hard to frame, as reality has shifted over the years

BY RORY SMITH

Each dossier holds close to 300 sheets of paper, so thin they are almost transparent, some filled with precise, clipped handwriting, others with symmetrical rows of type. Some contain allegations and accusations, but most are transcripts of interrogations carried out at the height of Stalin's Great Terror by the feared agents of the secret police.

For 75 years, the files have remained locked away in the archives of Russia's state security service: The country's laws dictate that only after that amount of time can classified documents be released. In the last few months, the first two of nine volumes related to this case have been declassified. The remaining seven are scheduled to be opened next year.

Yet even when those thousands of sheets of paper have spilled their secrets, even when the allegations and accusations of the K.G.B.'s network of agents and informers are known, the picture of the man at their center will not be complete.

Nikolai Starostin is perhaps the most significant figure in Russian soccer history. He was a player, a manager, an executive, a pioneer and a promoter, a leading light in the game here for more than half a century.

Most important, as a founder of Spartak Moscow, he represents a "kind of Noah figure" to the club, said Sergei Bondarenko, a researcher for Memorial, a civil rights organization focused on uncovering and understanding the hidden history of the Soviet Union. Bondarenko is the man responsible for persuading the F.S.B. — the K.G.B.'s successor — to open Starostin's files.

His face adorns the museum at Spartak's stadium in Moscow. There is a statue of him in a park not far from Luzhniki Stadium, where this year's World Cup final will be held. He is rippling with muscles, a towel draped around his neck, cast in bronze.

And yet quite what that legacy is, exactly who this icon was, is not yet set in stone.

In his black shirt and distinctive cap, Lev Yashin stands front and center on the official poster for the 2018 World Cup, unveiled last year by its designer, the artist Igor Gurovich, and Russia's deputy prime minister, Vitaly Mutko.

It is the first time that a real player has featured so prominently on a World Cup poster, traditionally a much more figurative space. When Gurovich was commissioned to create the poster, in that distinctive post-Constructivist Soviet style, though, it was obvious that Yashin should be included. "He is a symbol for all Russian fans," Mutko said at the introduction ceremony.

Not just Russians, in fact: Yashin, widely regarded as the finest goalkeeper in soccer history, is the one Soviet player whose fame crossed through the Iron Curtain.

He came to Western attentions at the 1958 World Cup, the first to be televised; his dark-blue outfit earning him the (technically incorrect) nickname the Black Spider. In 1963, he became the first, and so far only, goalkeeper to win the Ballon d'Or, the European player of the year award.

Yashin is a unique figure in other ways, too. He is, Bondarenko argues, the only Russian player whose legacy is uncontested and whose status has survived the transition from the Soviet Union into modern Russia entirely unscathed. "We have just the parade version of his history," he said. "And no one is interested in investigating his story in more depth."

Most of the other potential members of Russia's soccer pantheon are far more enigmatic.

This is a country with a long, rich history in the sport, but one whose iconography still remains somehow indistinct. In part, that is because Soviet reality itself was mutable, shifting. Those who

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SPORTS

A soccer history cloaked in contradictions

SOVIET, FROM PAGE 11

were revered one day were regarded as undesirable the next.

To some extent, though, it is a modern process, too. As researchers and historians have been able to uncover more about the lives the characters lived, they have shed more light on exactly who they were. In some cases, though, that has served only to showcase the differences between shades of gray.

That can work both ways. In the case of Eduard Streltsov, a player in the 1950s and 1960s known as the Russian Pelé — he is famed as the inventor of the back heel — the chimera of Soviet history has helped to burnish his reputation. Streltsov, a teenage superstar for Torpedo Moscow and the U.S.S.R. with a hard-drinking, womanizing lifestyle, was arrested in 1957 after an incident at a party and, eventually, convicted of rape.

He spent five years in the gulags before being released in 1963. Two years later, he returned to his club, helping Torpedo win the Russian championship and, in 1967, he was voted Soviet player of the year.

The stain of his rape conviction did not seem to affect his popularity. As the years have passed, it certainly has not diminished his status. That can be attributed, most likely, to the doubt — both contemporaneously and in hindsight — most had about the validity of Soviet justice.

Either way, it is hard to tell whether Streltsov was a hero or a villain, or both. The truth is what you want it to be. Though the circumstances are very different — and the process almost the polar opposite — Nikolai Starostin's place in history is just as elusive.

Spartak Moscow, the team Starostin and his brothers founded, was not just the Soviet Union's most popular team, one capable of packing stadiums wherever it traveled. For many years, it was also — in the eyes of some of its fans, though by no means all — a social signifier.

Under Communism, most teams were linked either to a governmental department or to a government-controlled industry. Dynamo Moscow was the sporting arm of the secret police, C.S.K.A. the team of the Red Army. Spartak was different: There was no affiliation to a powerful agent of the state.

In the words of Robert Edelman, a pre-eminent historian of Soviet sport at the University of California, San Diego, choosing which team to support was a "matter of identity, and preferences had political meaning." It was one of the few areas of Soviet life where the individual had agency, uninstructed by the state.

TASS, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Nikolai Starostin, far left, in the 1930s with Soviet leaders, including Nikita Khrushchev and Joseph Stalin, at Lenin's Tomb during a parade of athletes.

To choose Spartak, then, was seen as a safe act of defiance, perhaps even a quiet rebellion.

"Giving your heart to Spartak, you hung on to hope that this team was apart from all that surrounded it," as the historian Aksel Vartanyan put it. In the words of one Soviet scholar, Starostin and his family were cherished as a "small way of saying no" to the regime.

The remarkable story of the brothers' lives helped to burnish that image. They grew up in Presnia, a tough, cramped quarter of Moscow. They consorted with actors and musicians and artists in the chic nightclubs on Tverskaya, one of Moscow's main boulevards, in the 1920s and '30s; and their team, Spartak, defied the might of the secret police and, in particular, its fearsome head, Lavrenti Beria, to become the powerhouse of Soviet soccer, what Edelman dubbed the People's Team in the Workers' State.

Then, in 1942, the Starostins — Nikolai and his brothers, Andrey, Aleksandr and Pyotr — were arrested, initially on a far-fetched charge of plotting to assassinate Stalin. They were eventually sentenced on lesser economic charges, to a decade each in the gulag. When they returned, after Stalin's death in 1953, they were restored to their positions of primacy, their legends not only intact, but enhanced.

At first glance, the dossiers held in the F.S.B. archive confirm what Bondarenko refers to as the "myth of their lives, beautifully written by them." The two volumes that have been opened so far detail how the secret police had watched Nikolai Starostin since 1933, with the help of a co-opted Spartak teammate. The transcripts of the interrogations show how the invented charges of treason were transformed into quite different offenses: profiting from the black market, introducing bourgeois morals into Soviet sport, procuring so-called white tickets — exemptions from front-line army service once the U.S.S.R. had been drawn into World War II — and other luxuries for Spartak players.

ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

A monument to the four Starostin brothers at Spartak Moscow's stadium. They played a large role in forming the club, which was one of the most popular in the Soviet Union.

What Bondarenko has found, though, is that much of the Starostins' story is much more complex than a simplistic narrative of Nikolai and his brothers as mavericks defying the establishment.

"Nikolai represents a lot of things," he said. "He is the founder of our biggest club, a politician in his own strange way,

"We have just the parade version of his history. And no one is interested in investigating his story in more depth."

a symbol for silent resistance and 'our man' for the intelligentsia. But at the same time, the Starostins' legacy is problematic."

Bondarenko agrees with Edelman's verdict that the brothers were "very Soviet," not so much rebelling against the regime as simply trying to operate within it.

What he has found in the archives — though he is quick to point out that much of the "evidence" in the files is not beyond doubt — bears that out: allegations of using the "black economy, bribery, some unpleasant political things." The Starostins had friends in high places, too: not Beria, a devoted Dynamo supporter, or his secret police, but elsewhere in the Politburo, looking after their interests.

In Bondarenko's mind, none of this diminishes the Starostin legacy. "We can see in their lives that you cannot be good, or even a saint, in the circumstances of Stalinism," he said. "They were too scared then and did anything just to save their lives. Often, those things weren't pretty."

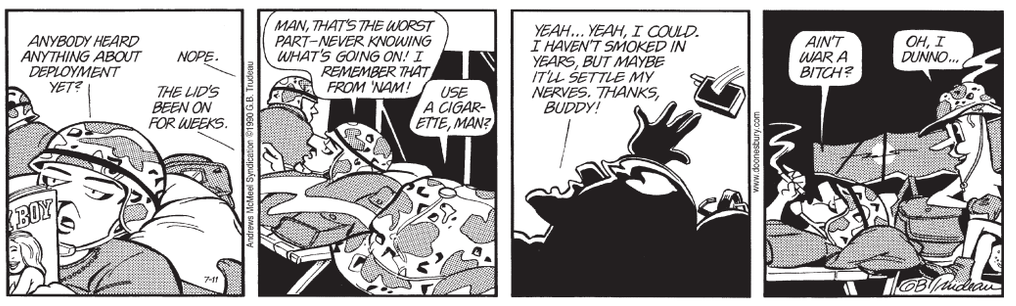
He does not feel it makes Nikolai Starostin or his family any less great, however.

It does not diminish what they should mean to Spartak, to Russian soccer, to the country as a whole. It simply places them in their true context; it allows Russian soccer to understand its history a little better. From the dark silence of the archives, it casts light on the shades of gray.

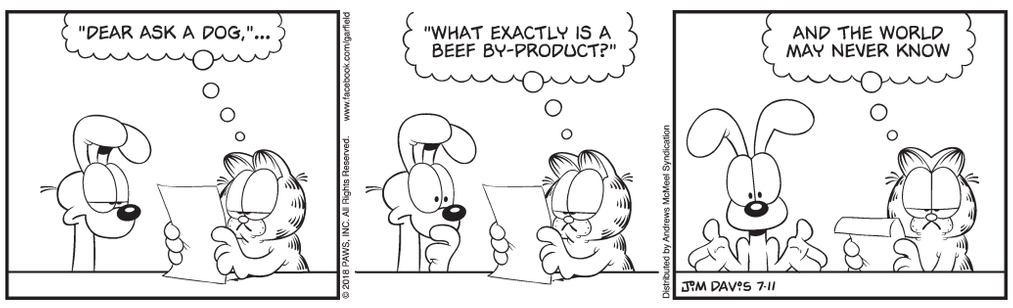
NON SEQUITUR

PEANUTS

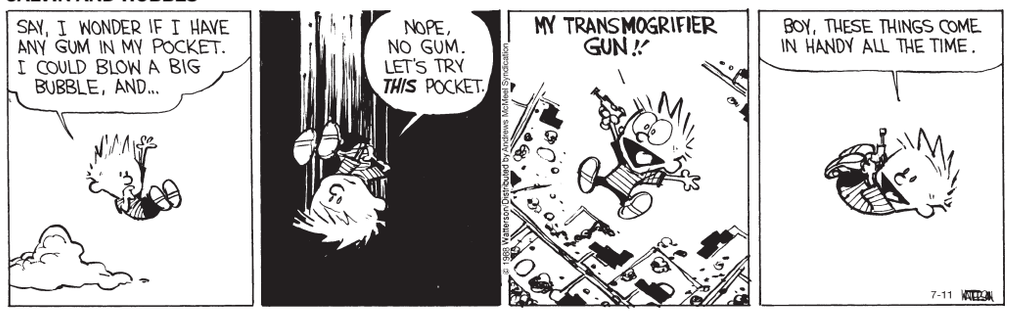
DOONESBURY CLASSIC 1990



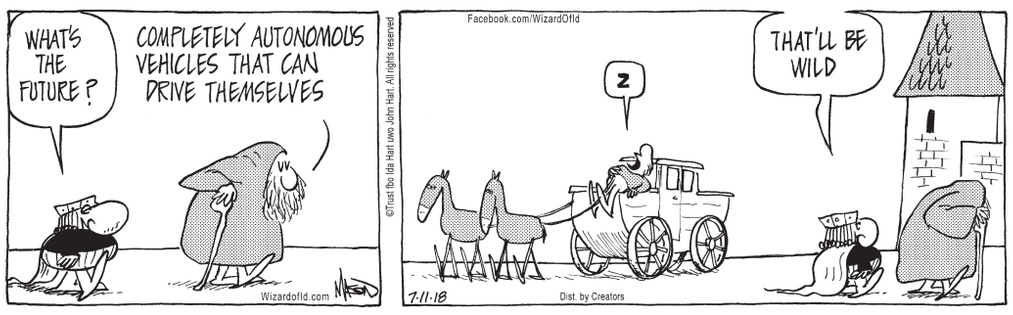
GARFIELD



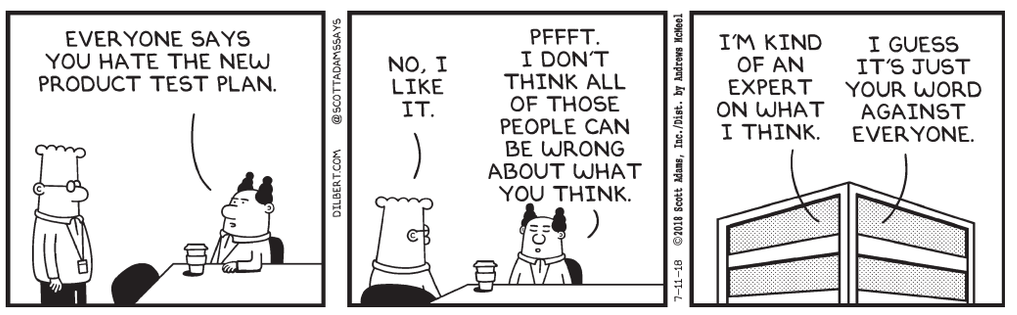
CALVIN AND HOBBES



WIZARD of ID



DILBERT



SUDOKU No. 1107

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

180711

Created by Peter Ritmeester/Presented by Will Shortz (c) PZZL.com Distributed by The New York Times syndicate

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

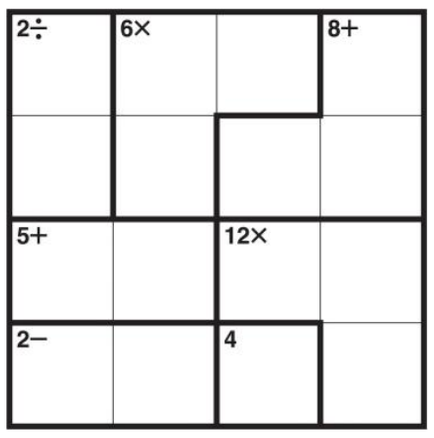
For solving tips and more puzzles: www.nytimes.com/sudoku

Solution No. 1007

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

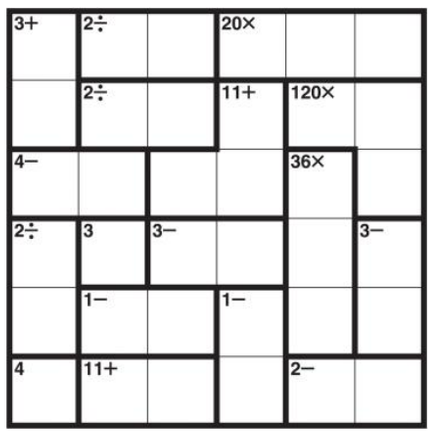
180710

KENKEN



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. For Feedback: nytimes@kenken.com



Answers to Previous Puzzles

1	3	4	2
3	2	1	4
4	1	2	3
2	4	3	1

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

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

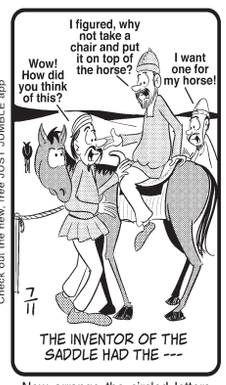
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

YOFRE

RINLE

DALPED

GJWIAS



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

Print your answer here: " " (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SOUPY PRONG SNAZZY KITTEN
Answer: When he failed the driving portion of his driver's test, he was in a — NO PASSING ZONE

CROSSWORD | Edited by Will Shortz

Across

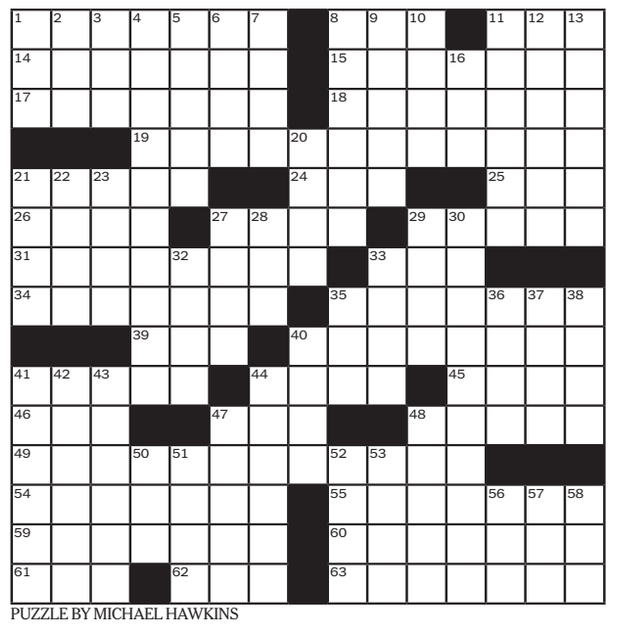
1 Suddenly stopped communicating with, in modern lingo
8 Daft
11 Utility bill meas.
14 Fresh spin on a familiar idea
15 Ride on a merry-go-round, maybe
17 Conceives
18 City nicknamed "The Gateway to the West"
19 Incommunicado period
21 Wade in the Baseball Hall of Fame
24 Bench press muscle, for short
25 Spook grp.
26 Running shoe brand
27 Put on a truck, say
29 "Don't ___ it!"
31 Debbie Downer
33 Frenzied place
34 Contacted without a trip to the post office, say
35 "Gone With the Wind" locale
39 ___ Stark, patriarch on "Game of Thrones"
40 Express one's opinion in no uncertain terms
41 Pianist/comic Victor of old TV
44 O'Hare and LAX
45 Emmy-winning Kudrow
46 What a weather balloon might be mistaken for
47 Roman sun god
48 General tone
49 What a late sleeper may use ... resulting in 19-, 31- and 40-Across?
54 Meditative exercises in a steamy room
55 Could no longer fit into, as one's childhood clothing
59 Pittsburgh pro
60 Former
61 Like the Canadian flag's maple leaf
62 Verb with "thou"
63 Verbally attack, with "at"

Down

1 Big purveyor of vitamin supplements
2 ___ Majesty
3 Be behind
4 Observatory activity
5 Byes
6 Barely made, with out
7 Lucy's guy
8 Tousled
9 Bit of a lark
10 ___ pickle
11 Leave, slangily
12 One of the Nixons
13 Vote out
16 Iowa college
20 Memorable 1995 hurricane
21 ___ in arms
22 Tube traveler
23 Egyptian tourist spot
27 Set off a polygraph
28 Up there in years
29 Procrastinator's promise
30 Six for dinner?
32 Paul who painted "Fish Magic"
33 For whom "it is not possible either to trick or escape the mind," per Hesiod
35 Great deal
36 "How's it ___?"
37 Supposing that
38 Many miles away
40 "Star Trek" role for George Takei
41 W.'s father
42 Significant
43 Entrenched
44 Capital of Tasmania
47 Bob with the Silver Bullet Band
48 Pledge drive giveaways
50 "Hey!" from Jesús
51 Author Émile
52 Hammer or sickle
53 "Chicken of the sea"
56 2016 Olympics host, informally
57 Bird whose name is also the initials of a school in Ypsilanti
58 Dampen

Solution to July 10 Puzzle

N	C	A	A		I	T	E	M			S	O	T	S
O	A	F	S		N	O	V	A		S	E	P	I	A
G	R	A	S	S	S	E	E	D		T	R	E	V	I
S	T	R	A	I	T			E	S	P	A	N	O	L
			I	D	I	O	M		L	A	P	D		
	W	E	L	L	L	O	O	K	Y	T	H	E	R	E
S	E	X		E	L	L	I	E			I	B	E	X
P	I	C	A	S	S	O		P	H	S	C	A	L	E
I	G	O	R			N	A	T	A	L		T	I	C
T	H	R	E	E	E	G	G	O	M	E	L	E	T	
		I	A	N	S		E	N	S	U	E			
S	T	A	R	T	L	E			A	T	T	A	I	N
A	R	T	U	R		F	U	L	L	H	O	U	S	E
S	I	E	G	E		F	R	I	A		U	R	N	S
S	O	D	S			S	L	E	D		T	A	T	S



PUZZLE BY MICHAEL HAWKINS

SCIENCE




PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHERINE TAYLOR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

From left: The catheter lab at Boston Children's Hospital where the infusion was done; Dr. Sitaram Emani, who administered the transplant; James McCully preparing a mitochondria pellet for infusion; photos and get-well wishes from Georgia Bowen's family.

Undoing the damage from a heart attack

An unusual transplant may revive human tissue considered beyond repair

BY GINA KOLATA

When Georgia Bowen was born by emergency cesarean on May 18, she took a breath, threw her arms in the air, cried twice and went into cardiac arrest.

The baby had had a heart attack, most likely while she was still in the womb. Her heart was profoundly damaged; a large portion of the muscle was dead, or nearly so, leading to the cardiac arrest.

Doctors kept her alive with a cumbersome machine that did the work of her heart and lungs. Physicians moved her from Massachusetts General Hospital, where she was born, to Boston Children's Hospital and decided to try an experimental procedure that had never before been attempted in a human following a heart attack.

They would take a billion mitochondria — the energy factories found in every cell in the body — from a small plug of Georgia's healthy abdominal muscle and infuse them into the injured muscle of her heart.

Mitochondria are tiny organelles that fuel the operation of the cell, and they are among the first parts of the cell to die when it is deprived of oxygen-rich blood. Once they are lost, the cell itself dies.

But a series of experiments has found that fresh mitochondria can revive flagging cells and enable them to recover quickly.

In animal studies at Boston Children's Hospital and elsewhere, mitochondrial transplants revived heart muscle that had been stunned after a heart attack but was not yet dead and revived injured lungs and kidneys. Infusions of mitochondria also prolonged the time organs could be stored before they were used for transplants and even ameliorated brain damage that occurred soon after a stroke.

In the only human tests, mitochondrial transplants appear to revive and restore heart muscle in infants that have been injured in operations to repair congenital heart defects.

For Georgia, though, the transplant was a long shot — a heart attack is different from a temporary loss of blood during an operation, and the prognosis is stark. There is only a short time between the onset of a heart attack and the development of scar tissue where once there were living muscle cells.

The problem was that no one knew when the baby's heart attack had occurred. Still, said Dr. Sitaram Emani, a pediatric heart surgeon who administered the transplant, there was little risk to the infant and a chance, though slim, that some cells affected by her heart attack might still be salvageable.

"They gave her a fighting chance," said the infant's mother, Kate Bowen, 36, of Duxbury, Mass.

The idea for mitochondrial transplants was born of serendipity, desperation and the lucky meeting of two researchers at two Harvard teaching hospitals — Dr. Emani at Boston Children's and James McCully at New England Deaconess Hospital.

Kate Bowen visits her daughter Georgia in the cardiac unit at Boston Children's hospital. The doctors who devised the procedure "gave her a fighting chance," Ms. Bowen said.

Dr. Emani is a pediatric surgeon. Dr. McCully is a scientist who studies adult hearts. Both were wrestling with the same problem: how to fix hearts that had been deprived of oxygen during surgery or a heart attack. "If you cut off oxygen for a long time, the heart barely beats," Dr. McCully said. The cells may survive, but they may never fully recover.

While preparing to give a talk to surgeons, Dr. McCully created electron micrographs of damaged cells. The images turned out to be revelatory: The mitochondria in the damaged heart cells were abnormally small and translucent, instead of a healthy black.

The mitochondria had beene damaged — and nothing Dr. McCully tried revived them. One day, he decided simply to pull some mitochondria from healthy cells and inject them into the injured cells.

Working with pigs, he took a plug of abdominal muscle the size of a pencil eraser, whirled it in a blender to break the cells apart, added some enzymes to dissolve cell proteins, and spun the mix in a centrifuge to isolate the mitochondria.

He recovered between 10 billion and 30 billion mitochondria, and injected one billion directly into the injured heart cells. To his surprise, the mitochondria moved like magnets to the proper places in the cells and began supplying energy. The pig hearts recovered.

Meanwhile, Dr. Emani was struggling with the same heart injuries in his work with babies.

Many of his patients are newborns who need surgery to fix life-threatening heart defects. Sometimes during or after such an operation, a tiny blood vessel would get kinked or blocked.

The heart would still function, but the cells that had been deprived of oxygen beat slowly and feebly.

He could hook the baby up to a machine like the one that kept Georgia Bowen alive, an extracorporeal membrane oxygenator, or Ecmo. But that is a stopgap measure that can work for only two weeks. Half of the babies with coronary artery problems who end up on an Ecmo machine die because their hearts cannot recover.

The idea for mitochondrial transplants was born of serendipity, desperation and the lucky meeting of two researchers.

But one day Dr. Emani was told of Dr. McCully's work, and the two surgeons met. "It was almost an 'aha' moment," Dr. Emani said.

Dr. McCully moved to Boston Children's, and he and Dr. Emani prepared to see if the new technique might help tiny babies who were the sickest of the sick — those surviving on Ecmos.

It was not long before they had their first patient. Early one Saturday morning in March 2015, the hospital got a call from a hospital in Maine. Doctors there wanted to transfer to Boston Children's a newborn baby boy whose heart had been deprived of oxygen during surgery to fix a congenital defect.

The baby was on an Ecmo but his heart had not recovered.

"We turned the intensive care unit into an operating room," Dr. Emani said.

He snipped a tiny piece of muscle from the baby's abdomen. Dr. McCully grabbed it and raced down the hall.

Twenty minutes later, he was back with a test tube of the precious mitochondria. Dr. Emani used an echocardiogram to determine where to inject them.

"The spot that is weakest is where we want to go," he said. "It is important to give as much of a boost as you can."

He injected a billion mitochondria, in about a quarter of a teaspoon of fluid.

Within two days, the baby had a normal heart, strong and beating quickly.

"It was amazing," Dr. Emani said.

The scientists have now treated 11 babies with mitochondria, and all but one were able to come off the Ecmos, Dr. Emani said. Still, three of them ultimately died, which Dr. Emani attributes to a delay in treatment and other causes.

Two died because their hearts were still so damaged, and one died of an infection. All of the more recent patients survived and are doing well.

In comparison, the death rate among a similar group of babies that did not get mitochondrial transplants was 65 percent. And none of the untreated babies recovered their heart function — more than a third of the survivors ended up on heart transplant lists.

More recently, Dr. Emani and his colleagues have discovered that they can infuse mitochondria into a blood vessel feeding the heart, instead of directly into the damaged muscle. Somehow the organelles will gravitate almost magically to the injured cells that need them and take up residence.

He and his colleagues are persuaded that these transplants work, but acknowledge that it would take a randomized trial to prove it.

The main problem is a scarcity of patients. Even if every pediatric center in the United States participated, along with every infant with injured heart muscle, it still would be hard to enroll enough participants in the trial.

But what about adult heart patients? Researchers are hoping that mitochondrial transplants also can repair heart muscle damaged during heart attacks in adults. And finding enough of those patients should not be an issue, said Dr. Peter Smith, chief of cardiothoracic surgery at Duke University.

Already researchers are planning such a trial. The plan is to infuse mitochondria or a placebo solution into the coronary arteries of people having bypass surgery or — an even more dire situation for the heart — having both bypass and valve surgery.

The patients would be those whose hearts are so damaged that it would be difficult to wean them from heart-lung machines after surgery. For these desperate patients, mitochondrial transplants "are a really intriguing option," Dr. Smith said.

"The likelihood is very high" that the study will begin next year, said Annetine Gelijns, a biostatistician at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York.

For Georgia Bowen, the procedure came too late: The portion of her heart muscle affected by the heart attack had died. Her doctors implanted a device that takes over the heart's pumping and hope her heart will recover enough for them to remove the device. But, to be safe, they put her on a list for a heart transplant. She seems to be improving, though — she is breathing on her own and can drink breast milk through a tube. Her heart is showing signs of healing.

"Georgia is a miracle who continues to fight daily and persevere through the obstacles she is dealt," Ms. Bowen said.

"In our hearts, we know she will pull through this and come home."

Back from beyond the brink of extinction?

Scientists express hope for a rhinoceros group that appeared to be lost

BY STEPH YIN

If you had asked Thomas Hildebrandt a decade ago whether the northern white rhinoceros could be saved, his answer would have been grim. The rhino's numbers had dwindled to single digits, and the few remaining individuals all had severe reproductive issues.

"We thought, 'The story's over,'" said Dr. Hildebrandt, a wildlife reproductive biologist at the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research and the Free University of Berlin. His prognosis got even bleaker when Sudan, the last male of the subspecies, died in captivity last spring.

But this month, Dr. Hildebrandt and a team of colleagues reported in the journal Nature Communications that the story of the northern white rhino is not, in fact, over.

Using frozen sperm from northern white rhinos and eggs from closely related southern white rhinos, the scientists created hybrid embryos that can potentially be implanted into surrogate southern white rhino mothers. This lab achievement is a very early step toward the much longer-term goal of resurrecting a population of full-blooded northern white rhinos, said Jan Stejskal, director of international projects at the Dvur Kralove Zoo in the Czech Republic and an author of the paper, in a press briefing on July 3.

Multiple teams around the world are working collaboratively on high-tech options for bringing back the northern white rhino, which is now functionally extinct. Only two females, a mother-daughter pair named Najin and Fatu, are still alive at Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya.

One avenue is in vitro fertilization, with northern white rhino eggs and sperm. This would involve producing early embryos in petri dishes that could then be transferred to develop in surrogate southern white rhinos.

Dr. Hildebrandt and his collaborators started to investigate this possibility. They had frozen sperm samples from four northern white males, and successfully used one sample to fertilize eggs from two southern white females, creating four hybrid embryos in total. Additionally, they created three full southern white rhino embryos.

DAI KUROKAWA/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Sudan was the last male northern white rhino. His death left the subspecies functionally extinct, but researchers want to try using frozen sperm and eggs to revive it.

The next step is to implant the southern white or hybrid embryos into surrogates, which should happen in the coming months, said Cesare Galli, founder and managing director of Avantea, a reproductive biotechnology company based in Italy, and an author of the paper.

If that succeeds, the researchers will appeal to the Kenyan authorities to let them harvest eggs from Najin and Fatu, then fertilize the females' eggs with stored northern white rhino sperm. The team hopes to see the first purebred northern white rhino born to a surrogate through this method in three years, Dr. Hildebrandt said.

One major drawback to this tactic is that the genetic pool from just two northern white cows and four bulls is extremely limited and would most likely lead to severe inbreeding.

Because of this, Dr. Hildebrandt's team and a group led by researchers at San Diego Zoo Global are also exploring another approach, using so-called induced pluripotent stem cells (also known as iPS cells). Such cells have been reprogrammed into blank canvases: They can become any other cell type in the body, including egg and sperm cells.

The strategy is promising because researchers have already generated iPS cells (though not egg and sperm cells yet) from northern white rhino skin cells, and because the San Diego Zoo has a genetically diverse collection of skin cells from 12 northern white rhinos.

The trade-off is that the iPS cell technology will take longer to develop — perhaps a decade or so, Dr. Hildebrandt estimated. In the meantime, it's important to pursue the more immediate possibility of in vitro fertilization with eggs from Najin and Fatu, he said, particularly if potential calves are to be raised around or socialized by the two northern white females in their lifetimes.

Conservation scientists widely applauded the technical sophistication of the new study, but several expressed concerns about relying too much on high-tech solutions.

It's still "a long road from creating an embryo to having a viable birth — and then an even longer path from succeeding once to creating a herd of rhinos," said Susie Ellis, executive director of the International Rhino Foundation.

She worried that technology can be "the shiny object in the room" that takes focus away from protecting habitat or supporting crucial, on-the-ground conservation efforts for remaining rhinos.

Terri Roth, director of the Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife at the Cincinnati Zoo, said that saving the northern white rhino — or any species — would ultimately require multiple facets.

"We should all be working on as many strategies as possible," she said. "Let's not throw any one out, because you just can't predict what's going to happen. We need all the help we can get."

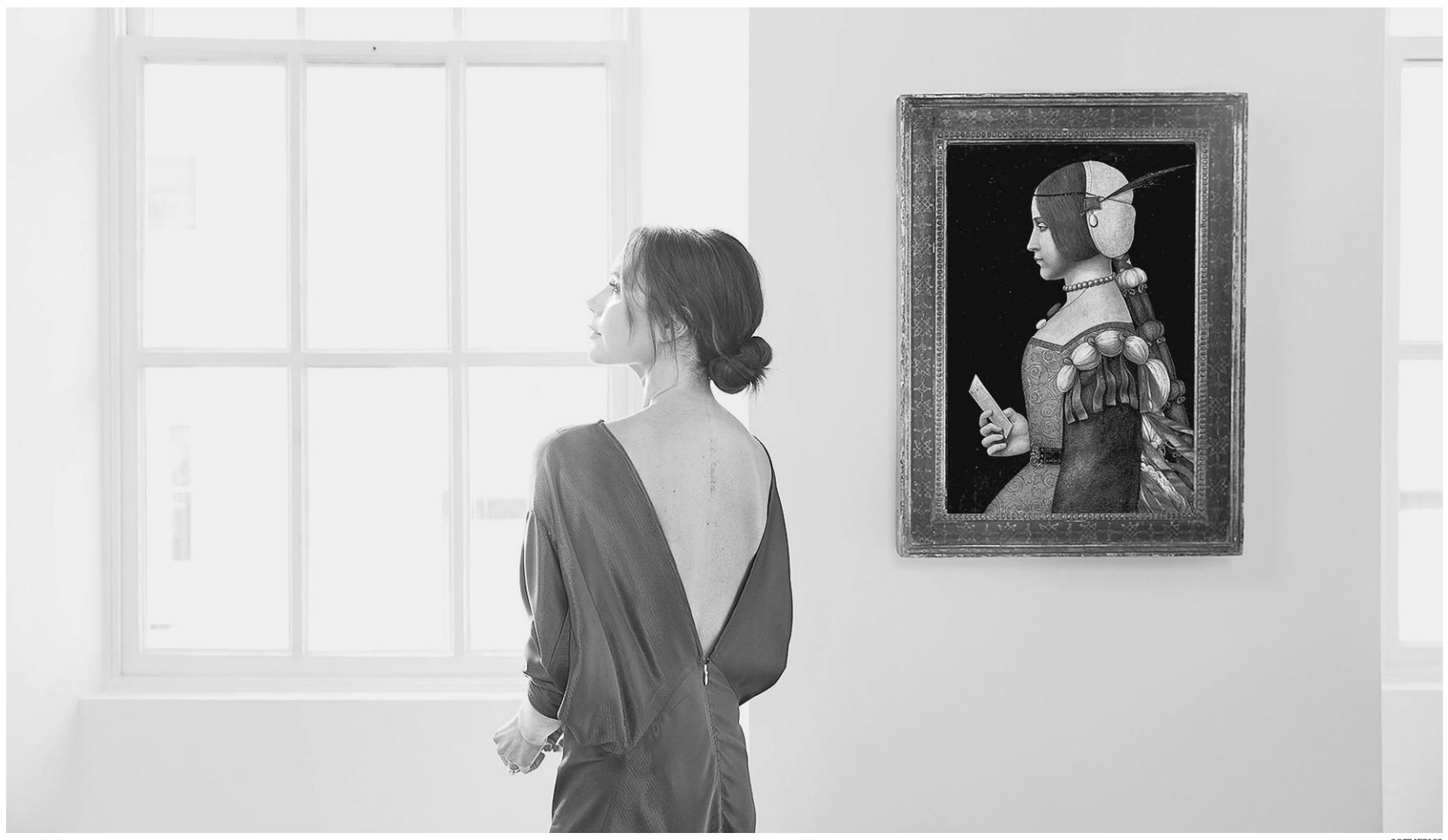
Culture

Adding some glitter to old masters

LONDON

Auction houses and fairs look to celebrity tie-ins to dispel an 'air of aloofness'

BY SCOTT REYBURN



SOTHEBY'S

How do you make the old new?

The art trade here faced that perennial challenge as old master auctions, the Masterpiece fair and the London Art Week gallery trail tried to reinvigorate interest in artworks and objects from before the 20th century.

Such art isn't exactly on-trend. Last year, European old masters represented just 7 percent of the world's fine-art auction sales, even with a sensational $450.3 million injection from Leonardo da Vinci's "Salvator Mundi." The number of visitors to the National Gallery in London was down 17 percent in 2017 from a year earlier, and those to the National Portrait Gallery fell 35 percent. How can centuries-old paintings and sculptures of gods, saints and aristocrats appeal to consumers in a digital present?

SOTHEBY'S

A Rubens portrait of a nobleman led sales at Sotheby's old masters auction last week.

Fortunately, some of today's most influential creatives have recently turned to old art for new ideas. On June 16, American pop's royal couple, Beyoncé and Jay-Z, released a joint album, "Everything Is Love," under the name The Carters. A virtuoso video for their single "Apes**t," set in the Louvre with the couple rapping in front of the "Mona Lisa" and dancers gyrating in front of Jacques-Louis David's "Coronation of Napoleon," has attracted more than 65 million views on YouTube.

Less than a week later in London, the fashion designer Victoria Beckham, inspired by a visit last year to the Frick Collection in New York, hosted in her flagship Mayfair store a six-day exhibition of 16 portraits from the July old masters auction at Sotheby's. The pop-up preview, funded by the auction house, coincided with London's contemporary art sales and generated a blaze of publicity.

"Popular culture is certainly having an effect," Alex Bell, Sotheby's worldwide co-chairman of old master paintings, said Wednesday night after his 66-lot auction raised 42.6 million pounds, or about $56.3 million. Mr. Bell pointed out that more than 7,000 people had visited Sotheby's during the presale view, almost twice the previous high for such an event. "It's the V.B. effect," he said.

What effect such celebrity endorsements had on the actual bidding was more difficult to quantify.

A photograph of Ms. Beckham standing next to a portrait of a lady by an artist in the "circle of Leonardo da Vinci" had, for example, drawn more than 193,000 likes on her Instagram account by Monday. Perhaps that might have encouraged at least one of the four bidders who pushed the price to £550,000, more than double the low estimate. It could also have been the "Salvator Mundi" effect.

It should also be pointed out that the total at the Sotheby's auction was down 19 percent from the £52.5 million achieved at the equivalent old masters sale in July last year, which included a £18.5 million J. M. W. Turner. Top-quality works by the biggest names — the combination that drives growth in every sector of the art market — remain in chronically short supply.

Sotheby's was able to offer an imposing 1630s head-and-shoulders portrait of a nobleman by Peter Paul Rubens that had never been seen at auction before, estimated at £3 million to £4 million. This had also been shown by Ms. Beckham, but a frowning middle-aged man with a beard was hardly Rubens's most appealing subject; it sold to a telephone bidder for a respectable £5.4 million, the top price of the sale.

"The auctions were thin," said John Lloyd, a private dealer in old masters based in London. "There were a lot of boring German and Flemish pictures that weren't great quality."

But one telephone bidder was prepared to spend £5.5 million on half a dozen of the better-quality Flemish paintings in the sale, culminating in £2.65 million for an exceptionally rare group of four circa-1420 panels depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary by a precursor of Jan van Eyck.

There wasn't much of a Beckham or Jay-Z effect to be felt the following evening at Christie's, where the usual crowd of besuited dealers watched another tranche of moderate-quality old masters sell for low estimate prices in the £100,000 to £500,000 range, or not sell at all.

MASTERPIECE

EDWARD HOPLEY

Clockwise from top: The designer Victoria Beckham in her London store during a Sotheby's preview; an 1843 bust of the writer Mary Shelley; old and new works were side by side at the Masterpiece fair.

The only moment of excitement came when three telephone bidders pursued a tender and finely preserved painting of the Holy Family from around 1520. The work, by the early Flemish painter Gerard David, went for £4.8 million, a new auction high for the artist.

Christie's achieved a total of £31.2 million from 61 lots, 29 percent down from the equivalent sale last July.

Masterpiece, whose ninth edition closed last Wednesday, describes itself as "the world's leading cross-collecting fair," pointing to its eclectic mix of art, jewelry, antiques and a Riva speedboat.

The Switzerland-based MCH Group, which owns Art Basel, acquired a 67.5 percent stake in the fair in November as part of its "global collector events strategy."

Prompted, in part, by declining revenue from its Baselworld jewelry fair, MCH is planning to expand its art events business in Asia, the Middle East and the United States, positioning Masterpiece as a luxury brand.

Under MCH's management, Masterpiece expanded to 160 exhibitors from 153. The fair, held as usual in a temporary structure on the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, was almost 20 percent bigger. It is also gaining ground as an event where dealers can make sales, up to a certain price point.

"You see a very different crowd here from Art Basel," said James Holland-Hibbert, a London dealer in modern British art who said he sold seven works priced at £100,000 to £350,000. "They're shoppers rather than collectors, but they are prepared to spend."

The powerhouse contemporary gallery Hauser & Wirth exhibited at Masterpiece for the first time and said it sold Jean (Hans) Arp's 1928 Surrealist relief "Cuillère et Nombrils" (Spoon and Navels), which had an asking price of 1.5 million euros, or around $1.7 million.

There was also a smattering of old master sales, like a 1560s portrait of a gentleman by the Italian painter Antonio Campi. Priced around £200,000, it was sold by the London dealers Agnews to a new British client.

Foot traffic and sales were somewhat slower in the 40 or so galleries participating in the London Art Week promotion. Callisto Fine Arts, a specialist in Italian pre-20th-century sculpture that is based in a fourth-floor apartment in Mayfair, typified the discoveries dealers make and the sales challenges they face.

Callisto was offering what it says is the only known three-dimensional portrait of the novelist Mary Shelley, carved in marble by the Roman sculptor Camillo Pistrucci and dated 1843. The author has drawn plenty of publicity this year as it is the bicentennial of the publication of "Frankenstein," but the sculpture remained available, priced at £100,000, and had not even been viewed by curators at the National Portrait Gallery, according to Callisto's founder, Carlo Milano.

On Wednesday, by contrast, the marketing power of Sotheby's propelled a rediscovered 1814 marble "Bust of Peace" by the neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova to £5.3 million, an auction high for the artist. On Thursday, Sotheby's announced that the prominent New York trader Otto Naumann had given up dealing to join the auction house as a senior vice president for old masters.

Mr. Milano is grateful for the spotlight that Jay-Z and Beyoncé's video extravaganza has shined on the old masters. "That was the best bit of publicity we could ever hope for," he said. "We have to remove the air of aloofness that hangs over old masters."

It may be wishful, or even desperate, thinking, but dealers and auction house specialists are understandably hopeful that the sight of Jay-Z rapping in front of Théodore Géricault's "Raft of the Medusa" will encourage a new generation to take an interest.

The challenge is finding an artwork as interesting as that Géricault for them to buy.

Strange, sad descent

MOVIE REVIEW

A documentary filmmaker delves into the painful life of Whitney Houston

BY WESLEY MORRIS

My heart goes out to anybody who arrives at Kevin Macdonald's new Whitney Houston documentary expecting a celebration of music and once-in-a-generation talent. Those are both present — the songs, that voice. But they're heavy with cost. They're warped, enlisted to indict rather than delight. The goose bumps Houston's singing gives you in "Whitney" are the goose bumps you get anytime you hear her sing. There's a clip of her, at 19, on "The Merv Griffin Show" doing "Home" from "The Wiz," and the chills that come are involuntary. Here was a fever you wanted to catch.

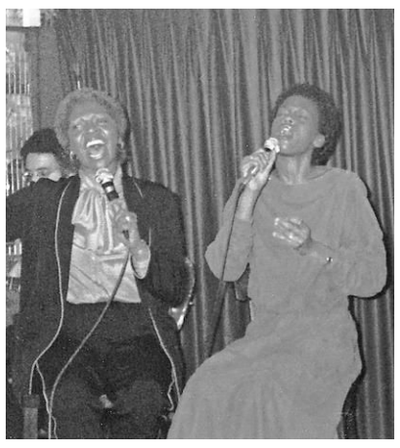
Even at this early point, the movie urges you to think about Houston as someone other than — or in addition to — one of the three or four greatest vocalists in the history of American popular music. It presents her life anew and reconsiders the very private suffering with which she might have lived it. How did someone whose nickname was Nippy go so suddenly from angel to ghost?

"Whitney" is too funereal to be a party, too sad, strange and dismaying to cheer. Yet, in its grim, guilt-inducing way, the film works, even on the occasions when it's working against itself. What Mr. Macdonald wants to do is a kind of cultural psychobiography. The movie comprises a range of footage (famous and mostly rare) along with one-on-one interviews with her family and friends and exes and collaborators about her childhood, fame, sexuality, technical ingenuity, drug addiction, and the raising of her daughter, Bobbi Kristina, who was also an addict. Houston's mother, the singer Cissy Houston, her ex-husband, Bobby Brown, and the music executive L. A. Reid seem self-protective in their reticence and deflection. But most participants, like her aunt and personal assistant Mary Jones, gush memories, analysis and feelings.

Together, it all becomes a roiling drama built around Houston's celebrity. No one person is responsible for her drug-related bathtub drowning in 2012. Guilt here is powerfully diffuse. Yet when one of Houston's two brothers leans forward and stage-whispers something like, "This family is full of secrets," it sounds like histrionics. But this family really was. It was rich in lies and charades, too, like Cissy and her ex-husband, John, going out in public as a couple to bolster the wholesome, whiter image they and the Arista records executive Clive Davis wanted for Houston.

Some of the trouble might stem from the years the three Houston kids spent living with relatives in the Newark, N.J., area while their mother was on tour. We learn that Houston's drug use actually began when she was a teenager. Another of the film's bombshells has already made it to the press, but the film itself isn't sensational about it. A question of whether she had been sexually abused is casually raised, affirmed then unpacked by several people. And it blows open your perception of Houston as a star, mother, wife, addict and persona. It reframes her unceasingly gossiped-about bond with her best friend and assistant Robyn Crawford, so that a question like "Were they lovers?" insults the salvation of the friendship.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE ESTATE OF WHITNEY E. HOUSTON/MIRAMAX-ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS



Left, the singer Whitney Houston. Above, with her mother, Cissy Houston.

This is the second movie in two years about Houston's demise made by a white British man. Last spring we got "Whitney: Can I Be Me?," which the tireless gumshoe speculator Nick Broomfield directed with Rudi Dolezal. It was a Swiss Army knife of pointed fingers. That juicy, speculative sensationalism was right for the director of "Kurt & Courtney" and "Biggie and Tupac." But even at Mr. Broomfield's sleaziest, some kind of compassion is along for the ride. Mr. Macdonald is a Scotsman who's moved between meaty nonfiction ("One Day in September," "Touching the Void," "Marley") and trashy melodrama like the Idi Amin blood bath, "The Last King of Scotland." Their Houston documentaries complement each other in a way that establishes an unhappy genre of pop forensics — Whitney: SVU.

They share some of the same players and pivotal events, like Cissy Houston and Mr. Davis's early hold over Houston's career and her being audibly denounced at the Soul Train Awards. (Mr. Macdonald's film remembers Al Sharpton as a notably ruthless assailant of her racial authenticity.) Both films argue for what a primal scene the Soul Train Awards were. She was booed, she saw Mr. Brown perform, and a light bulb is said have gone off. Her humiliation as insufficiently black allegedly drew her to Mr. Brown, who, at the time, was at the height of his talent and popularity.

Culturally, this interpretation makes sense. Maybe her apparent lack of legible blackness made a striking contrast with his abundance of it. We've been meant to find some kind of Faustian bargain in this — the selling of *a* soul for some soul. That reading of Whitney-meets-Bobby has never satisfied me. It discounts Mr. Brown's profane sexiness and how it magnetized millions of Americans to him. (I remember wanting his phone number, too.) Maybe Houston's attraction was opportunistic. Maybe she also got caught in a pop star's tractor beam. It also disserves how hard it must have been for Mr. Brown to resist Houston, at least the spontaneous, cutting, charismatic version of her these two movies present. Houston was responding to *something* about this man, and what if it was more than a Boston adolescence spent in public housing?

Mr. Macdonald can see Houston as being greater than her victimhood. Or maybe it's that he sees her victimhood as being a tragedy greater than any single culprit. The opening minutes come from the set of the "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" video, the most buoyant (and blond) five minutes Houston ever had in the MTV era. But the first thing you *hear* is Houston recounting a recurring dream in which she runs from the Devil and is never caught. (Later we hear her tell Diane Sawyer, in a flabbergastingly intimate interview, that she's her biggest devil.)

While she ruminates, chaos keeps interrupting the images from the video until it rips the buoyancy apart. And what comes bulldozing through is riot footage that's meant to connect Houston to her upbringing in Newark. You see something like that, and you groan. It's a cinematic flourish that suggests a director who doesn't trust his material.

But Mr. Macdonald doesn't let up. He uses a montage to boil down her explosion into superstardom scored only, at first, to the vocal track of "I Wanna Dance With Somebody." So you get the Billboard chart zoom-ins put in a blender with bad-metaphor shots of a rocket launch and footage of the Statue of Liberty, a Coca-Cola commercial and, randomly, Michael Jackson in his "Bad" video. He pulls this move once or twice more (tossing in Bill Clinton, O. J. Simpson, the Oklahoma City bombing, Princess Diana's death, the Los Angeles riots), and we're meant to think of this woman's turmoil as matching half of the planet's. But if it feels like too much, it probably should. Here's an argument for Houston as this tabloid-addled natural resource that we guzzled like soda.

Really, though, you don't even have to look that far out. Simply probing Houston's ache gives "Whitney" its hefty woe. Toward the end of the film, Mr. Macdonald takes us back to her doing "Home" that day on "Merv Griffin." Seeing it again, after absorbing the biographical shocks, deepens the movie and its subject. Now, you hear not only longing but pain. Whitney from Newark becomes the inverse of Dorothy from Kansas — or, in "The Wiz," Dorothy from Harlem. Maybe the wicked witches and phony wizards made home seem like such a terrible place that she might actually have felt safer in Oz.

American Ballet Theater's new shape

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

The spring season's end provides an opportunity to reassess the company

BY ALASTAIR MACAULAY

JULIETA CERVANTES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Each spring, American Ballet Theater moves into the Metropolitan Opera House in New York for eight weeks like a juggernaut. How do you fill that vast, nearly 4,000-seat theater for eight performances a week? Every year, the answer changes as the season progresses.

Momentum seems to build throughout each season, as it did this year in particular. Throngs flooded in for the final production, Alexei Ratmansky's "Whipped Cream," which closed on Saturday night. Such crowds were seldom seen in the opening week's performances of "Giselle" in May or in the following month, when the house was too often underpopulated.

That run of "Giselle" had other problems: Lighting was dim, and few dancers seemed interested in projecting to the Met's further reaches. Projection was also an issue last month, when I watched three performances of "Don Quixote" from the Family Circle, the theater's uppermost level of seats. It was instructive to see how several of the company's stars were, successfully, addressing a larger audience. Even so, few seemed to perform as if they knew the Family Circle existed. Beneath the shoulders, they relished the expanse of the Met's large stage. Their faces, however, kept focusing ahead as if on the classroom mirror, with no lift of the eyes and cheekbones. Ballet is a thrillingly multidimensional art: Too few dancers remember this.

In the past decade, Ballet Theater has changed considerably: It's not long since the company catered to balletomanes who needed Russian names (Irina Dvorovenko, Natalia Osipova, Diana Vishneva and others); this season, Ms. Osipova's sole Giselle was the only remaining token of that. Instead, the presence today of such principals as Stella Abrera, Misty Copeland (now the company's main draw) and Hee Seo is helping it become an American exemplum of racial diversity. And these dancers have come up through the ranks.

JULIETA CERVANTES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

All this century, Ballet Theater has been the world's foremost haven of male virtuoso dancing. But here, too, the names keep changing. Jeffrey Cirio is leaving; Daniil Simkin plans to commute between New York and Berlin, where he will dance with the Staatsballett; and Alban Lendorf has long been absent with an injury.

The absence of Marcelo Gomes — who resigned from the company in December and will now return to New York in August with the Sarasota Ballet — would be less painful if other men were mainstays on his level. This spring, Herman Cornejo (still the company's most miraculous stylist); Cory Stearns (at his finest in the two final weeks); and James Whiteside (always startling in energy and focus) came nearer to being central artists.

But David Hallberg, who created roles in Mr. Ratmansky's "Firebird" (2012) and "Whipped Cream" (2017), didn't grace those ballets or several other vehicles with his presence this year. When he danced "Giselle," with Osipova, and "Romeo and Juliet," with Isabella Boylston, the ballerinas blazed fervently throughout, whereas he gave gracious guest-star performances, beautifully indicating his roles rather than inhabiting them.

ANDREA MOHIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above, Misty Copeland in "Whipped Cream." Far left, Jeffrey Cirio in the same ballet, and left, Isabella Boylston and James Whiteside in "Harlequinade."

There's more to say of individual dancers. It's more important, however, to observe that Ballet Theater keeps becoming more of a company — with a profusion of talented dancers at corps and soloist levels — and increasingly stylish.

When we talk of style, however, we turn to repertory. Here, Ballet Theater remains a divided soul.

The company has long been America's foremost exponent of what has been called the Holy Trinity of classical ballet: Petipa the Father, Balanchine the Son, Ashton the Holy Ghost. This year, in an anomaly, Ashton has been banished — even though no story ballets make more glorious impressions at the Met than "Cinderella," "The Dream" and "La Fille Mal Gardée"; and Balanchine will return only briefly in the fall with a revival of "Symphonie Concertante."

That leaves Petipa. This year is the bicentennial of his birth; his name was among the credits in five of the season's eight weeks, with "La Bayadère," "Don Quixote," "Giselle," "Harlequinade" and "Swan Lake." But these different views make Petipa seem to have multiple personality disorder. In "Harlequinade," staged by Mr. Ratmansky from period sources, mime is bright, vivid, musical; but in "Swan Lake," staged by Kevin McKenzie, large parts of the mime are missing, others have been changed, and few are played with power. "Don Quixote" is a flashy circus romp: Though Mr. McKenzie's production is similar to most others, this is a ballet that trivializes any notion of classicism.

Mr. Ratmansky grew up in Soviet Russia, but his productions (he also staged "The Sleeping Beauty" for Ballet Theater in 2015) show a passion to establish a view of Petipa that shakes off the many stylistic changes of the Soviet era: filigree footwork, vividly communicative mime, dramatic coherence underlying the dance. Mr. McKenzie grew up in the United States, but his stagings show a hearty indifference to such niceties. Odette, the Swan Queen, dances a version of the pas de deux that is full of Soviet accretions; Odile, her ballroom counterpart, dances a grand pas de deux so Sovietized that little Petipa is left but the famous 32 fouetté turns (of which most ballerinas deliver intensely embellished versions of fewer than 32).

Natalia Makarova worked this spring to refine her 1980 production of "La Bayadère"; I was grateful for the improvements. Occasionally, this ballet's 1877 score is the masterpiece of its composer, Ludwig Minkus, though John Lanchbery's 1980 arrangement often beefs it up into film music; in the dances of both Act I's festivities and Act II's vision of the Shades, there's often an insufferable oom-chah coarseness. Mr. Lanchbery died in 2003; it might be time for a new arrangement that makes Minkus's more formulaic numbers sound expressive, rather than trite.

Still, "La Bayadère" — a ballet whose classical beauties I've often admired — is a deeply awkward piece. It's a culturally imperialist view of India. Nikiya is an Indian temple dancer; when she dies, she goes to a Christian idea of ballet heaven (Petipa was inspired by an illustration for Dante's "Divine Comedy" by Gustave Doré). She has left behind all that was Indian about her. It's an idealist ballet; but its ideals, in our era, now seem misplaced.

The shoe must go on

BOOK REVIEW

Kicks: The Great American Story of Sneakers
By Nicholas Smith. *308 pp. Crown. $26.*

BY ASH CARTER

Leave it to a sneaker historian to note that when Tommie Smith and John Carlos made their famous Black Power salute at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, they stepped up to the podium shoeless, each sprinter carrying a single Puma Suede. (The gesture was meant to symbolize black poverty.) In "Kicks: The Great American Story of Sneakers," Nicholas Smith is continually freezing such iconic moments and zooming in on the overlooked footwear.

We learn that Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams, the British Olympians memorialized in the 1981 movie "Chariots of Fire," were shod by Joseph William Foster, whose grandsons went on to start Reebok. And that Jesse Owens won his four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin games in a pair of track spikes courtesy of the brothers Rudolf and Adi Dassler, the future founders of Puma and Adidas, respectively. The Dassler brothers' role in Owens's triumph over the *Übermenschen* is, however, somewhat diminished by the fact that they also outfitted the German team and had belonged to the Nazi Party since 1933 — and sold soccer cleats called "Blitz" and "Kampf."

But mostly the story of sneakers is, as Smith's subtitle suggests, an American one: of humble origins and unapologetic success, of self-expression through consumerism and association with celebrity, of a product being put on a pedestal and a brand name serving as an artist's signature. The boom was fueled by a series of fitness crazes, beginning with "pedestrian fever" in the mid-19th century, when spectators filled New York City's Madison Square Garden to watch a six-day walking race; followed shortly thereafter by the vogue for croquet, the first sport to necessitate a rubber-soled shoe; "sidewalk surfing," better known as skateboarding, in the 1960s; jogging in the 1970s; aerobics in the 1980s; and "cross-training" in the 1990s.

DAVID CORIO/REDFERNS, VIA GETTY IMAGES

The footwear of choice of a member of Run-DMC in London in 1986.

"Kicks" is filled with interesting trivia — Plimsolls are named for the horizontal stripe used to judge a ship's seaworthiness; the exposed bubble on the Nike Air Max was inspired by the Pompidou Center in Paris — but it relies too much on contemporary sources. Smith mentions in passing that Michael Eugene Thomas, the killer in the horrific 1989 case that prompted the Sports Illustrated cover story "Your Sneakers or Your Life," went on to commit a series of non-sneaker-related murders, yet presents the original media narrative at face value. He recounts the controversies surrounding the slavelike working conditions at overseas contract factories, but has little to say about the industry's environmental impact.

Smith is not a "sneakerhead" himself, and "Kicks" is not for the initiate. But there is enough material on the cult of the sneaker to satisfy most curious outsiders. The modern era began in 1985: Year 1 in the sneakerhead calendar. The "Buttfaces," as Nike's executives called themselves, decided to let their roughly 120 N.B.A. sponsorships expire and bet everything on one promising rookie named Michael Jordan, based largely on a single crowd-pleasing N.C.A.A. title-winning jump shot. In a preseason game, Jordan was fined $1,000 for violating the league's dress code — a steal, publicity-wise — but the offending article was a pair of Air Ships, not Air Jordans, as Smith suggests.

"If kids out there are into the new sneakers, that's cool," Mike D of the Beastie Boys is quoted as saying to MTV's "House of Style" in 1992. "We just lean toward the classic, functional design." (In this case, the "deadstock" Adidas Campus.) The group kept a "sneaker pimp" on the payroll to root around the stockrooms of sporting goods stores for such unworn relics of the old school. "You gotta find them, like records," his bandmate Ad-Rock said. "It's like a hobby."

The Beasties represented the classicist strain of sneaker collecting, which had by then entered its rococo phase. The "Made in Italy" Air Jordan II, released in 1986, featured faux-lizard leather detailing and cost a "then-unheard-of" $100. Today, limited-edition models like the Supreme x Nike Air Foamposite 1 retail for hundreds, and trade for thousands on the billion-dollar secondary market. Meanwhile, at Puma, the mantle of creative director passed just last month from Rihanna to Jay-Z. Soon the finer auction houses will have credentialed experts on hand to authenticate Dunks of dubious provenance and appraise heirloom Yeezys.

Ash Carter is a senior editor at Esquire.

TRAVEL

California city offers more than a beach

FRUGAL TRAVELER

Just south of Los Angeles, Long Beach pulses with cultural diversity

BY LUCAS PETERSON

The word "discover" is always a misnomer when used by travelers: When a place is new to you, that doesn't mean it's new to everyone else. This was reinforced recently in the midst of my excitement exploring a dynamic midsize city close to where I live in Los Angeles, one with roughly the population of Miami or Kansas City. No, I'm not referring to San Diego or Palm Springs.

I'm talking about Long Beach, a port city less than 20 miles south of downtown Los Angeles. It's got a cute and compact downtown, good food, ethnic and cultural diversity, a thriving gay and lesbian community and some unparalleled wildlife viewing opportunities. I spent a few days recently exploring Long Beach by foot, car and bike and left feeling as if I had more to explore. Even better, I was able to have a great time without spending much money.

The city thrives on beach culture, but the draw isn't necessarily surf and sand — there are better beaches nearby. Instead, expect to enjoy the shore through waterside eating and drinking establishments, boat trips and bike rides.

Two of Long Beach's biggest tourist draws, just south of downtown, are the RMS Queen Mary, a docked 1930s-era ocean liner that served as an Allied troop ferry during World War II, and the Aquarium of the Pacific, with marine science and conservation programs on Rainbow Harbor. Both are worthy attractions, but I headed to the area with a different goal — I'd heard Long Beach was fantastic for whale and dolphin watching.

I picked up a Groupon for Harbor Breeze Cruises, spending just $36.80 for two tickets (down from a walk-up price of $90) for a 150-minute ocean cruise and whale-watching tour.

Along with a couple dozen other locals and tourists, we were treated to little more than a pleasure cruise during the first two-thirds of the trip. But then, the distinctive sound of air and water blasting through a whale's blowhole, like a short burst of television static.

About halfway between the shore and Santa Catalina Island, we spotted the long, slender, grayish bodies of two fin whales, the second-largest mammals on earth, bobbing gently like apples in a barrel. Each emitted a powerful blowhole blast or two before disappearing under the water with little warning — our guide explained that fin whales don't make a big show of their tails before taking a deep dive.

We spotted several groups of two to three whales. The massive and enchanting creatures lolled gently before snorting indignantly a few times and submerging; they seemed entirely unconcerned with us humans. As a bonus, a pod of dolphins joined alongside our boat on the way back to shore.

Long Beach's outdoor delights can be enjoyed by boat, but perhaps a more terrestrial approach is your thing. I used the Social Bicycles app to buy some time on the Long Beach bikeshare network, which is fairly extensive, with hubs throughout the city. The rental cost is $7 per hour, and I took advantage of an offer that gives a free hour with the purchase of three.

I was able to rent a bike and enjoy a ride along Junipero Beach, a good vantage point for one of Long Beach's offshore historical oddities: the THUMS oil islands. In the 1960s, following a lift on a drilling ban, American energy companies spent $22 million on a series of artificial islands to extract oil from beneath the harbor. You wouldn't know it by looking at them: The islands look like shopping malls from shore, with extraction facilities masked by phony building facades. You can't visit them, but they're an odd and interesting footnote in the area's long history with the oil industry.

Getting back to things you *can* visit: The Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden, on the Long Beach campus of California State University, is a respite of tranquillity, with koi, ducks and beautiful landscaping. Admission is $5, but I was allowed in free of charge since I arrived close to the garden's closing time. Alamitos Park, at the end of Alamitos Peninsula, has a calming energy and is a nice place to walk or bike to.

Much of Long Beach is walkable, and one of the most fun areas to explore, on East 4th Street near Cherry Avenue, has a number of excellent vintage and thrift shops packed into a couple of blocks. The nonprofit AIDS Assistance Thrift Store is a good place to start, with a mountain of secondhand merchandise for treasure-seekers, ranging from old paintings to furniture. Assistance League of Long Beach Thrift and Vintage Shop is another good one, selling $4 shirts and $12 suits; I picked up a pair of shoes for $8.

BETH COLLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The eclectic Past and Present is in a Long Beach neighborhood filled with vintage shops and thrift stores.

Other stores fall more into the vintage (not thrift) category with curated collections that are slightly pricier. Past and Present is an eclectic shop with items ranging from old Disney merchandise to glassware and board games. Most of it isn't cheap, but there is a shelf with $10 shirts and $5 art prints. Meow specializes in accessories and apparel never previously sold or used. And La Bomba may have been my favorite, if only for the cute little dog there that snoozes among the piles of old clothes and shoes.

For years, Long Beach has had a reputation as one of the United States' most gay-friendly cities.

At The Hangout, another place on East 4th Street, I struck up a conversation with Marissa Baklayan, a stylist and photographer who was working at the shop. We chatted for a bit about The Hangout's decidedly singular concept — succulents and ice cream — and I asked her how she liked Long Beach. "Everyone here knows each other, especially in this neighborhood," she said.

Across the street at the casual restaurant The HipPea, I picked up a falafel sandwich ($7.99). One of the employees, Brian, echoed a similar sentiment, but added that a lack of rent control had become problematic. Rents have risen sharply in Long Beach in recent years as people have realized it's a progressive and diverse community that's less expensive than many neighboring coastal cities. The resulting gentrification threatens the livelihoods of some renters.

For years, Long Beach has had a reputation as one of the United States' most gay-friendly cities. The Alamitos Beach neighborhood has pride flags flying outside many bars and restaurants, and rainbow crosswalks are painted in intersections along East Broadway. I spent an enjoyable karaoke night at Executive Suite, a gay-friendly nightclub in the Zaferia neighborhood northeast of downtown. To encourage patrons to perform, the club awards $2 tokens, redeemable at the bar, for each song that is sung.

Also in Zaferia is Joe Jost's, a 1920s-era tavern that looks like it hasn't changed much since it opened. I struck up a conversation with Doug Pricer, a local writer and historian who told me that Zaferia was once its own town. "Zaferia used to be wet when Long Beach was dry," he said.

I ordered a Coors Light ($2.60) and a Joe's Special, a nicely spiced Polish sausage with Swiss cheese and a pickle on rye bread ($3.45) and a mountain of pretzels and spicy yellow chilies.

If you're looking for more of a meal, I'd recommend heading to Cambodia Town, centered on a roughly mile-long stretch of East Anaheim Street and home to one of the largest Cambodian populations outside of Asia. At Riverside Supermarket, just west of Cherry Avenue, you can pick up hot food as well as groceries. I bought a container of mixed-seafood sour soup for $4.99 that was sharp and tangy. You can pick up plants outside the market as well — I bought a jasmine bush for $10 and a rice paddy herb plant, called ma om in Khmer, for $3. Another day, I picked up an order of pad kee mao ($8.25) from Tasty Food to Go, a small restaurant specializing in Thai and Lao cuisine.

I was equally happy with the variety of different cultural activities I sampled, beginning with the Museum of Latin American Art ($10 admission), an institution dedicated to the support of Latino and Latin American art and artists. I enjoyed the exhibit "El Exploratorio," which focused on the intersection of art, science and technology. A standout was Linda Vallejo's "Datos Sagrados," which wove together mesmerizing pictographs with data about Latino immigration.

At the Long Beach Playhouse I took in a performance of Lynn Nottage's "Crumbs From the Table of Joy," which explores issues of adolescence, race and religion in the life of a black family in 1950s New York City ($20). Afterward, I headed to Ballast Point, an absurdly large brewpub with great views on the Alamitos Bay Marina. I picked up a Moscow Mule sour beer ($5) and got lost on one of the property's patios. Sipping on the gingery drink, I plotted my next visit: My to-do list was barely halfway done. Long Beach, it seemed, demanded — and deserved — more attention.

Doing the one-way math

To get a great airfare, you don't have to book a round-trip itinerary

BY DAVE SEMINARA

RICHIE POPE

If you want to find bargain airfares during peak holiday travel periods, particularly in the summer, you'll need to be flexible and creative. For example, I frequently book one-way flight segments, even if it means using airports that weren't in my original plans. In my world of traveling, a trip to Greece can veer off into Britain, Denmark or anywhere else that saves me money.

Conventional wisdom dictates that you have to book a round-trip itinerary to get a great price. This was once true, but it isn't necessarily the case anymore. Most major American carriers used to price what some call open-jaw segments — flying into one city and then returning from another — for price-insensitive business travelers. But competition and the increasing popularity of one-way flights has changed this dynamic.

The Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC), which provides intelligence on air travel, released a report last summer on one-way tickets that concluded, "The long-held belief that it is better to purchase round-trip tickets whenever possible to get the best fares is simply no longer true."

Updated data provided to The Times by ARC shows that the percentage of one-way tickets (versus round-trip tickets) purchased by American travelers increased from 29 percent in 2014 to 44 percent in the first four months of 2018. And the premium airlines charged for one-way tickets declined from 44 percent in 2014 to 11 percent in 2018.

My recent experiences mirror this trend. When I wanted to travel from my home airport in Redmond, Ore., to Los Angeles and Palm Springs, Calif., around Christmas last year, I found nothing but exorbitant airfares. Then I expanded my geographic range and saved by flying into McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas and departing from Los Angeles International Airport about 10 days later.

Las Vegas, 280 miles from Los Angeles, isn't normally associated with saving significant money for a traveler bound for Southern California, but in this case, because I was buying four tickets for my family, it was worth changing my itinerary, even accounting for the higher price I paid for my rental car (a common problem related to open-jaw itineraries that can sometimes be solved by redeeming points for a one-way car rental). Ultimately, I ended up saving about $1,200 over all.

When shopping for fares to Europe, I often search for one-way deals using Google Flights and simply adding nearby airports in the search function and looking at the fare calendar. If you're flexible, it pays to find the cheapest entry and exit points to Europe and then fill in the gaps overland or with flights on low-cost carriers like Norwegian Air, Ryanair, easyJet, Vueling, Wizz Air, Primera Air and others.

For example, if you're traveling from North America to Europe, try flying into London or the Nordic capitals of Reykjavik, Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen or Helsinki. They are often great access points for travel to almost anywhere on the Continent.

In the summer, it can be hard to score a great fare directly to Mediterranean countries, particularly Greece and Italy. When recently searching for fares from Oregon to Athens, I found most round-trip fares were about $2,000 each — a pricey proposition since I'm buying four tickets. But then I noticed a one-way fare under $400 to London on WestJet, a Calgary-based, low-cost carrier. A few more clicks and I realized that I could spend the weekend in London and then proceed to Corfu on Ryanair for $125.

If you're flexible, it pays to find the cheapest entry and exit points to Europe and then fill in the gaps with low-cost carriers.

I didn't see any cheap flights home from Corfu, but I found that Norwegian Air had a $90 flight from there to Copenhagen. Norwegian makes it easy to find their lowest fares, displaying them by month on their route map and fare calendars. Ryanair also has a useful route map with pricing.

Copenhagen wasn't part of my original plan, but it's a splendid place to spend a few days, and Norwegian often has ridiculously low, one-way, trans-Atlantic fares from $200 and up.

After booking my trip to London, I learned that WestJet's pilots had voted to strike days before I made my plans. I contacted the airline and a spokeswoman said that WestJet would refund passengers if flights are canceled because of union action.

At first I was concerned, knowing that if there was a strike, a refund wouldn't help us get to Europe, at least not at the rock-bottom price I had found. But the more I thought about it, I realized that labor issues present both risks and opportunities for low fares. Strikes are often averted at the last minute or last only a few days. If your timing is flexible, it could be worth a gamble.

In this case, my concerns — including the possibility of an actual strike — were alleviated quickly as WestJet pilots agreed to a mediation process with the airline.

Brian Kelly, the founder of the website The Points Guy, which helps travelers maximize their frequent flier miles and find deals, says that in assessing the risk of airline labor problems, he's more concerned when he hears of potential strikes in Europe, as they tend to drag on longer.

Strikes aside, Mr. Kelly said he frequently does what I do: adjust his travel plans if he finds one-way fares that are more tempting than round-trip options.

"I buy open-jaws and fill in the gaps, especially in Europe with all the low-cost carriers," he said. "British Airways is now charging for water in coach, so it's not like you're getting a luxurious experience flying on the bigger airlines."

It's a fair point; my flight on WestJet turned out to be comfortable and on time.

On European low-cost carriers, however, it is best to board flights with low expectations.

My $125 flight to Corfu felt like a bargain when I bought it, but not when I had to actually endure the journey. As with everything else, you get what you pay for, so do your research and weigh your pocketbook concerns against your tolerance for discomfort.