

External Forces Pushed Sudan Toward a War

Offering Weapons and Seeking Advantage

By DECLAN WALSH

NAIROBI, Kenya — As war consumes Sudan, nations from around the world have mobilized swiftly.

Egypt scrambled to bring home 27 of its soldiers, who had been seized by one of Sudan's warring parties. A Libyan warlord offered weapons to his favored side, American officials said.

Diplomats from Africa, the Middle East and the West have appealed for a halt to the fighting that has reduced parts of the capital, Khartoum, to a smoking battlefield.

Even the leader of Russia's most notorious private military company, Wagner, has gotten involved. Publicly, he has offered to help mediate between the rival generals fighting for power, but American officials say he has offered weapons, too.

"The U.N. and many others want the blood of the Sudanese," Yevgeny Prigozhin, the Wagner founder, said in a statement. Without a hint of irony, Mr. Prigozhin, who is waging a brutal military campaign on behalf of Russia in Ukraine, added: "I want peace."

The rush of international activity may seem sudden, but it reflects a dynamic that loomed over the country well before its two leading generals turned on each other this month: Sudan has been up for grabs for years.

The revolution of 2019 — in which tens of thousands of protesters ended the three-decade dictatorship of President Omar Hasan al-Bashir — was supposed to usher in a bright and democratic future. But it also spelled new opportunities for outside powers

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EVACUATION The U.S. removed its diplomats from Sudan's capital, an American official said. PAGE 11

Ruling on Pill Puts Prudence Above Power

By ADAM LIPTAK

WASHINGTON — It was an interim ruling, and the majority gave no reasons. But the Supreme Court's order on Friday night maintaining the availability

of a commonly used abortion pill nonetheless sent a powerful message from a chastened court.

"Legal sanity prevailed, proving that, at least for now, disrupting the national market for an F.D.A.-approved drug is a bridge too far, even for this court," said David S. Cohen, a law professor at Drexel University.

Ten months ago, five conservative justices overturned Roe v. Wade, eliminating a constitutional right to abortion that had been in place for half a century. They did so almost as soon as a third Trump appointee arrived, tilting the balance on the bench sharply to the right. All three of the Trump justices were in the majority.

Cynics might be forgiven for thinking that the decision last June, in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, was a

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MAURICIO LIMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Striving for Normalcy as Bombs Continue to Fall

Nadiia Mefodivna, 70, cooking in her basement while explosions rattle Siversk, eastern Ukraine. More coverage of the war, Page 10.

Group That Advises U.S. on Opioids Took Millions From Sacklers

By CHRISTINA JEWETT

For the past decade, the White House and Congress have relied on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, a renowned advisory group, to help shape the federal response to the opioid crisis, whether by convening expert panels or delivering policy recommendations and reports.

Yet officials with the National Academies have kept quiet about one thing: their decision to accept roughly \$19 million in donations from members of the Sackler family,

the owners of Purdue Pharma, the maker of the drug OxyContin that is notorious for fueling the opioid epidemic.

The opioid crisis has led to hundreds of thousands of overdose deaths, spawned lawsuits and forced other institutions to publicly distance themselves from Sackler money or to acknowledge potential conflicts of interest from ties to Purdue Pharma. The National Academies has largely avoided such scrutiny as it continues to advise the government on painkillers.

"I didn't know they were taking

Institute Kept Quiet on Link to Drugmaker

private money," Michael Von Korff, a prominent pain care researcher, said. "It sounds like insanity to take money from principals of drug companies and then do reports related to opioids. I am really shocked."

Unlike the World Health Organization, which was accused of being manipulated by Purdue and later retracted two opioid policy

reports, the National Academies has not conducted a public review to determine if the Sackler donations influenced its policymaking, despite issuing two major reports that influenced national opioid policy.

One of those reports, released in 2011 and now largely discredited, claimed that 100 million Americans suffered from chronic pain — an estimate that proved to be highly inflated. Still, it gave drugmakers another talking point for aggressive sales campaigns, primed doctors to prescribe opi-

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Alumnus Fights Diversity Effort From the Inside

By STEPHANIE SAUL

Bert Ellis, with two degrees from the University of Virginia, is a loyal alumnus. He has donated more than \$10 million to his alma mater, and even co-owns a campus hangout, the Spot.

But he thinks the university is headed in the wrong direction. He objects to its emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion programs — saying the university is already diverse. And he loathes the university's recent portrayal of its founder, and his hero, Thomas Jefferson.

Mr. Ellis co-founded a dissident alumni group, the Jefferson Council. And when Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, was elected governor of Virginia in 2021, largely on a pledge to overhaul education, Mr. Ellis saw an opening.

"This is our only opportunity to change/reverse the path to Wokeness that has overtaken our entire university," he wrote in a post for the Jefferson Council.

Now Mr. Ellis, 69, is on the university's board of trustees, appointed recently by Mr. Youngkin.

Mr. Ellis is part of a growing and forceful movement fighting campus programs that promote diver-

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KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

100 Best Restaurants in New York City

Pete Wells goes beyond what's on the plate to capture the character of dining. A Special Section.

In California, Uncle Fuzzy and the Gang Scoop Up 'Flood Gold'

By THOMAS FULLER

PLACERVILLE, Calif. — Albert Fausel spends his days at the family hardware store sorting through boxes of bolts and pacing the old, creaking floorboards to greet his loyal clientele.

But on a recent sunny afternoon, he threw on his wet suit and diver's mask and inserted himself face down in the shallow

creek near his home.

An amateur gold seeker, Mr. Fausel used his gloved fingers to sweep aside the sand and gravel at the bottom of the creek and then, still under water, let out a cry that was audible through the tube of his snorkel: "Wooooo-hooooo!"

He emerged with what gold seekers call a picker — not quite a nugget, but big enough to pinch in your fingers — and he deli-

cately handed the glinting object to his fellow prospector, a friend with a long white beard who goes by Uncle Fuzzy. In just 20 minutes of rooting around the creek bed, Mr. Fausel had found about \$100 worth of gold.

There's a fever in California's gold country these days, the kind that comes with the realization that nature is unlocking another stash of precious metal. California's prodigious winter rainfall

blasted torrents of water through mountain streams and rivers. And as the warmer weather melts the massive banks of snow — one research station in the Sierra recorded 60 feet for the season — the rushing waters are detaching and carrying gold deposits along the way. The immense wildfires of recent years also loosened the soil, helping to push downstream

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INTERNATIONAL 4-11

Docked by a Drought in Italy

A ferry immortalized in a Leonardo da Vinci sketch has stopped running in the town of Imbersago, a victim of climate change and red tape. PAGE 4

METROPOLITAN

Diamond District in the Rough

The demise of Manhattan's Old World jewelry industry has been predicted for years, but dealers catering to a hip-hop clientele suggest a revival. PAGE 7

SUNDAY BUSINESS

The Crypto Detectives

Early adopters thought cryptocurrencies were private and untraceable. But tracking the flow of funds has become a big business. PAGE 1

ARTS & LEISURE

A Suspect Rebirth

Investigators seized an ancient Greek cup from the Met last year. They doubt the reconstruction of it from fragments was just a product of genius. PAGE 14

SUNDAY OPINION

Mark O'Connell

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Advertisement for Ashley Park featuring a woman in a pink outfit and the word 'UNO' in large letters.

Advertisement for Skechers shoes featuring a pink sneaker and the text 'SKECHERS. Amour! Bonjour!'.

Advertisement for Skechers shoes featuring a woman's legs wearing a pink sneaker and the text 'SKECHERS.COM'.