

Haiti Engages
A Private Army
To Fight Gangs

Blackwater Founder, a
Trump Ally, Is Hired

This article is by **David C. Adams, Frances Robles and Mark Mazzetti.**

Erik Prince, a private military contractor and prominent supporter of President Trump, is working with Haiti’s government to conduct lethal operations against gangs that are terrorizing the nation and threatening to take over its capital.

Mr. Prince, the founder of Blackwater Worldwide, signed a contract to take on the criminal groups that have been killing civilians and seizing control of vast areas of territory, according to senior Haitian and American government officials and several other security experts familiar with Mr. Prince’s work in Haiti.

Haiti’s government has hired American contractors, including Mr. Prince, in recent months to work on a secret task force to deploy drones meant to kill gang members, security experts said. Mr. Prince’s team has been operating the drones since March, but the authorities have yet to announce the death or capture of a single high-value target.

Security experts said Mr. Prince has also been scouting Haitian American military veterans to hire to send to Port-au-Prince and is expected to send up to 150 mercenaries to Haiti over the summer. He recently shipped a large cache of weapons to the country, two experts said.

The Haitian government is awaiting the arrival of arms shipments and more personnel to step up its fight against the gangs.

American officials said they were aware of Mr. Prince’s work with Haiti’s government. But the full terms of the Haitian government’s arrangement with Mr. Prince, including how much it is

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Pulling Off Plan
For L.A. Games
Is a Feat in Itself

By **ADAM NAGOURNEY and JESUS JIMÉNEZ**

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles officials brimmed with confidence a decade ago as they urged the International Olympic Committee to make the city the first in the U.S. to host the Summer Olympics since 1996.

“Follow the sun,” they said in the official bid for the Games in 2015. Los Angeles promised terrific weather, a \$1 billion Olympic Village to house athletes, a state-of-the-art transit system that would allow for a car-free Olympics and a ready-to-go network of stadiums and arenas.

But three years before the opening of the 2028 Summer Olympics, those ambitious promises have been scaled back, supplanted by obstacles that are threatening to undercut preparations for an event that would test this city’s wits and resources even in the best of times.

Los Angeles is struggling to recover from the calamitous fires in January, and is girding for a shortage of workers and supplies just as preparations for the Games reach their height. The city government is confronting a projected deficit of nearly \$1 billion, and the mayor is facing the threat of a tough re-election campaign.

The Trump administration has been antagonistic to this overwhelmingly Democratic city and state, raising concerns about whether the federal government will come through on all of the \$4 billion in funding promised for Olympics security and trans-

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TRAVIS DOVE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Charlotte Pipe and Foundry in North Carolina is among U.S. companies frustrated by trade fraud.

Germany Pledges More Arms Support to Ukraine

By **CHRISTOPHER F. SCHUETZE and MARC SANTORA**

BERLIN — Chancellor Friedrich Merz said on Wednesday that Germany would step up its support for Ukraine, increasing funding for the production of weapons — including long-range ones — and sending more military equipment to Kyiv.

The announcement, made at a joint news conference with President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, comes as the United States is stepping away from the

Zelensky’s Visit Allows
Merz to Fill Breach
Left by the U.S.

conflict and as Europe has been forced to move into the breach.

Mr. Merz, without providing specifics, said Germany would supply Ukraine with more funding to step up domestic production of weapons, including those with long-range capabilities, and also increase shipments of military

equipment from Germany.

The German Defense Ministry later provided more detail about the aid, saying it included cooperation in weapons construction, air-defense systems, hand-held and other weapons and financing of satellite communications. The value was roughly 5 billion euros, or about \$5.7 billion, it said.

Mr. Zelensky was visiting Berlin in a bid to secure more assistance from Europe’s industrial powerhouse, and holding his third meeting with Mr. Merz since the German leader took office this

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ARIANA DREHSLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

‘A Public Health Ticking Time Bomb’

The mayor of Imperial Beach, Calif., is sick of trash and sewage flowing in from Mexico. Page A10.

As Tariffs Rise,
So Do Schemes
To Avoid Them

Methods Like Shipping
via Third Countries

By **ANA SWANSON and LAZARO GAMIO**

WASHINGTON — As President Trump’s tariffs have ratcheted up in recent months, so have the mysterious solicitations some U.S. companies have received, offering them ways to avoid the taxes.

Shipping companies, many of them based in China, have reached out to U.S. companies that import apparel, auto parts and jewelry, offering solutions that they say can make the tariffs go away.

“We can avoid high duties from China, which we have already done many in the past,” read one email to a U.S. importer.

“Beat U.S. Tariffs,” a second read, promising to cap the tariffs “at a flat 10%.” It added: “You ship worry free.”

“Good News! The tariffs has been dropped finally!” another proclaimed.

The proposals — which are circulating in emails, as well as in videos on TikTok and other platforms — reflect a new flood of fraudulent activity, according to company executives and government officials. As U.S. tariffs on foreign products have increased sharply in recent months, so have the incentives for companies to find ways around them.

The Chinese companies advertising these services describe their methods as valid solutions. For a fee, they find ways to bring products to the United States with much lower tariffs. But experts say these practices are methods of customs fraud. The companies may be dodging tariffs by altering the information about the shipments that is given to the U.S. government to qualify for a lower tar-

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More on White House

IMMIGRATION A student’s arrest seems to be a first time by ICE in New York City this year. PAGE A11

TRUMP LOSES An executive order targeting the law firm WilmerHale was struck down. PAGE A12

18 Wheels, Few Regulations
And No One in Driver’s Seat

By **TIM BALK**

The semitruck rumbled down the congested, five-lane Texas highway, letting a small sedan pass on its right, then accelerating past another semi on its left.

In the back seat of the truck’s sun-drenched cabin, a middle-aged man watched YouTube videos on his phone. Behind him, a 53-foot refrigerated trailer carried nearly 25,000 pounds of pastries.

Nobody was in the driver’s seat. Last month, Aurora Innovation, based in Pittsburgh, became the first company to operate a driverless 18-wheeler on an American highway, ushering in an era that could drastically change how cargo moves across the United States.

Autonomous trucks, proponents say, could solve a knot of problems facing the American shipping industry, which has struggled to recruit drivers for grueling, low-paying long-haul shifts, and which expects major growth in cargo shipment activity in the coming decades, driven by the overwhelming popularity of online shopping.

These new trucks won’t need sleep, they won’t speed, and they won’t get road rage. They won’t ride the brakes or make unnecessary lane changes, wasting fuel.

THREAT BY ISRAEL
SHADOWS U.S. BID
FOR AN IRAN DEAL

NEW PUSH FOR STRIKES

Tension With Netanyahu
Grows as Trump Tries
for Nuclear Talks

This article is by **Julian E. Barnes, David E. Sanger, Maggie Haberman and Ronen Bergman.**

WASHINGTON — As the Trump administration tries to negotiate a nuclear deal with Iran, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel has been threatening to upend the talks by striking Iran’s main nuclear enrichment facilities, according to officials briefed on the situation.

The clash over how best to ensure that Iran cannot produce a nuclear weapon has led to at least one tense phone call between President Trump and Mr. Netanyahu and a flurry of meetings in recent days between top administration officials and senior Israeli officials.

Mr. Trump said on Sunday that there could be “something good” coming about his effort to limit Iran’s nuclear program in the “next two days.”

Others familiar with the negotiations said that at best there would be a declaration of some common principles. The details under discussion remain closely held and would probably only set the stage for further negotiations, starting with whether Iran could continue to enrich uranium at any level, and how it would dilute its stockpiles of near-bomb-grade fuel or ship them out of the country.

The New York Times reported in April that Israel had planned to strike Iranian nuclear sites as soon as this month but was waved off by Mr. Trump, who wanted to keep negotiating with Tehran. Mr. Netanyahu, however, has continued to press for military action without U.S. assistance.

Israel is not a participant in the negotiations between the United States and Iran. At the core of the tension between Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Trump is their differing views of how best to exploit a mo-

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GENE J. PUSKAR/ASSOCIATED PRESS

An Aurora self-driving truck on a test track in Pittsburgh.

NATIONAL A10-17

A ‘Radiant Link’ for Peace

Sarah Lagrim, an Israeli Embassy aide killed last week, was mourned as someone who sought to help others. PAGE A17

SpaceX Rocket Flight Fails

The Starship sprang a propellant leak on Tuesday, causing it to break apart re-entering the atmosphere. PAGE A12



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Charges of Global Conspiracy

Cocaine disguised in fruit shipments was to be traded for an arsenal from Syria’s deposed dictator to arm a Latin American criminal syndicate. PAGE A4

Climate Lawsuit Is Dismissed

However, the judges ruled that German civil law could be used to hold companies accountable for the worldwide effects of their emissions. PAGE A5

Israel Kills Teen Born in U.S.

The death in the West Bank of Amer Rabee, a Palestinian American, has spurred questions about the use of force, and accountability. PAGE A6

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Young Dancers Stand Out

It may be that the littlest performers, cast as fairies and butterflies, are the real stars of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at New York City Ballet. PAGE C1

Racing to the Stage

Little Island’s season opens with “The Counterfeit Opera,” which has had a fast and furious gestation. PAGE C1

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Is There Any Magic Left?

All postseason, the Knicks have made the impossible possible. Now they’re one loss away from disappearing. PAGE B9

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Hard Choices for Japan

With its debt twice the size of its economy, the country faces pressure to curtail crucial spending. PAGE B1

Risks for Battery Industry

As energy demands soar, tariffs and the tax bill threaten domestic factories that make batteries to store power. PAGE B1



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Mixing In a New Generation

Northern Soul, a British dance-centric scene featuring music of Black Americans, has gained new fans. PAGE D5

A Sacred Undertaking

A Utah-based company is helping Mormons dispose of their religious garments in a respectful manner. PAGE D1

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Thomas L. Friedman

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