



VOLODYMYR HORDIENKO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Attack Devastates Ukrainian City
The strike on Sumy, close to the Russian border, killed dozens. It appeared to be the deadliest attack on civilians this year. Page A5.

NEWS ANALYSIS

No Easy Path For Iran Talks

Two Sides’ Hard-Liners
Leery of Nuclear Deal

By STEVEN ERLANGER

BERLIN — The first meeting between the United States and Iran over its expanding nuclear program on Saturday displayed a seriousness of purpose and an effort to avoid what neither side wants, another war in the Middle East. They will talk again next Saturday, but the hard work lies ahead, as hard-liners in both countries, and Israel, are expected to balk at most any deal.

If the first nuclear deal, reached in 2015, was prompted by Iran’s desire to rid itself of punishing economic sanctions, these talks have more urgency. Iran, battered by Israel and with its regional proxies diminished, still wants economic relief. But it also understands that the Islamic Republic itself is under threat and that President Trump, who pulled out of the first deal because he thought it was too weak, may not be bluffing about Iran’s facing “bombing the likes of which they’ve never seen before.”

And Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has given his negotiators at least one last chance to trade Iran’s nuclear ambitions for lasting security.

The talks, in Oman, also promised some efficiency. The 2015 deal was struck between Iran and six countries — the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany, with the European Union playing the role of intermediary — and took two years.

This time the talks are bilateral, with the Europeans but also Russia and China on the sidelines. And although the United States remains “the Great Satan” for Ayatollah Khamenei, it also holds the key to restraining Israel and securing any lasting settlement. While Iran insisted on indirect talks through Oman, and Mr. Trump on direct talks, the two sides managed to fudge the issue, with Mr. Trump’s special envoy, Steve Witkoff, talking directly to Iran’s foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, as the meeting ended.

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For Democrats, Risky Forays Into the Oval Office

By REID J. EPSTEIN and TYLER PAGER

WASHINGTON — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan stood glumly in the Oval Office, hoping no one would take her picture.

She had not expected to be there, standing in front of the cameras, as President Trump signed executive orders punishing those who opposed his 2020 election lies. Ms. Whitmer, a prominent Democrat seen as a possible 2028 presidential candidate, had come to the White House to discuss funding for an Air National Guard base near Detroit and aid for thousands of Michiganders who had just been hit by an ice storm.

Governors Who Seek a Relationship Walk a Delicate Line

Then Mr. Trump’s aides surprised her on Wednesday by ushering her into the Oval Office not for her scheduled one-on-one meeting with the president, but for a politically loaded appearance before the press corps. She found herself an unwilling participant in his unending reality show, with photos of her rocketing around group chats of Democratic strategists who wondered what on earth she was doing.

The episode was the result of a

remarkable attempt at reconciliation between Ms. Whitmer and Mr. Trump, who dismissed her in 2020 as “that woman from Michigan” during a clash over his administration’s pandemic response.

The day after the inauguration, Ms. Whitmer penned a handwritten letter — which has not been previously reported — congratulating Mr. Trump, saying she looked forward to working together and praising his support for the auto industry in his first address, according to a person who relayed the text of the letter. Ms. Whitmer included her cellphone number and invited Mr. Trump to call her if she could be of any help to him.

The outreach worked for her, Continued on Page A14



ERIC LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, center, in a surprise meeting with the White House press corps last week.

A Helicopter Traced New York’s Skyline Over 1,600 Times. Its Fate Was Tragedy.

This article is by Michael Wilson, Andy Newman, Maia Coleman and Olivia Bensimon.

Lionel Carles and his wife and young son arrived from Nice, France, on Wednesday with a list of things to see and do in New York City: St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Rockefeller Center, Top of the Rock, Fifth Avenue. And, an exciting highlight — a helicopter tour of the skyline.

Rafn Herlufsen, visiting from Iceland with his teenage son, made similar plans: a Knicks game at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday, a helicopter tour later in the week.

And Agustín Escobar, a Spanish executive with the technology giant Siemens, bought one of the longer flights offered by the tour company, New York Helicopter. Five tickets, for himself, his wife and their three children for a trip

that would last 20 minutes and include a George Washington Bridge flyover.

Each family arrived at their assigned time on Thursday at a helipad near the South Street Seaport for their flight with New York Helicopter. They listened to safety briefings and posed for photographs in front of the chopper they flew that day, tail number N216MH.

By day’s end, that helicopter

Trump Tariffs Shake Faith In the Safety of U.S. Bonds

Long Seen as a Sure Bet in Global Finance, Treasures Now Reflect Uncertainty

By PETER S. GOODMAN

There are not many certainties in the world of money, but this traditionally has been one of them: When life turns scary, people take refuge in American government bonds.

Investors buy U.S. Treasuries on the assumption that, come what may — financial panic, war, natural disaster — the federal government will endure and stand by its debts, making its bonds the closest thing to a covenant with the heavens.

Yet turmoil in bond markets last week revealed the extent to which President Trump has shaken faith in that basic proposition, challenging the previously unimpeachable solidity of U.S. government debt. His trade war — now focused intently on China — has raised the prospect of a worldwide economic downturn while damaging American credibility as a responsible steward of peace and prosperity.

“The whole world has decided that the U.S. government has no idea what it’s doing,” said Mark Blyth, a political economist at Brown University and co-author of the forthcoming book “Inflation: A Guide for Users and Losers.”

An erosion of faith in the governance of the world’s largest economy appears at least in part responsible for the sharp sell-off in the bond market in recent days. When large numbers of investors sell bonds at once, that forces the government to offer higher interest rates to entice others to buy its debt. And that tends to push up interest rates throughout the economy, increasing payments for mortgages, car loans and credit card balances.

Last week, the yield on the

closely watched 10-year Treasury bond soared to roughly 4.5 percent from just below 4 percent — the most pronounced spike in nearly a quarter century. At the same time, the value of the American dollar has been falling, even as tariffs would normally be expected to push it up.

Other elements also go into the explanation for the bond sell-off. Hedge funds and other financial players have sold holdings as they exit a complex trade that seeks to profit from the gap between existing prices for bonds and bets on their future values. Speculators have been unloading bonds in response to losses from plunging stock markets, seeking to amass cash to stave off insolvency.

Some fear that China’s central bank, which commands \$3 trillion in foreign exchange reserves, including \$761 billion in U.S. Treasury debt, could be selling as a form of retaliation for American tariffs.

Given the many factors playing out at once, the sharp increase in yields for government bonds registers as something similar to when medical patients learn that their red blood cell count is down: There may be many reasons for the drop, but none of them are good.

One reason appears to be an effective downgrading of the American place in global finance, from a

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STANDOFF As trade tensions with China rise, U.S. businesses are in the cross hairs. PAGE B1

VARIABLES The tariff rate on Chinese imports can be as high as 245 percent — or zero. PAGE A9

From a Cell, a Russian Scientist Feels a Chill Sweeping the U.S.

By ELLEN BARRY

A barracks-style detention center in Louisiana is jammed with around 90 immigrant women, mostly undocumented workers from Central and South America, sharing five toilets and following orders shouted by guards.

There is also, among them, a Russian scientist.

She is 30 years old, shy and prone to nervous laughter. She cannot work, because her laptop was confiscated. She plays chess with other women when the guards allow it. Otherwise, she passes the time reading books about evolution and cell development.

For nearly eight weeks, Kseniia Petrova has been captive to the hard-line immigration policies of the Trump administration. A graduate of a renowned Russian physics and technology institute, Ms. Petrova was recruited to work at a laboratory at Harvard Medical School. She was part of a team investigating how cells can rejuvenate themselves, with the goal



POLINA PUGACHEVA

Kseniia Petrova, a Harvard scientist, is jailed in Louisiana.

of fending off the damage of aging.

On Feb. 16, customs officials detained her at Logan International Airport in Boston for failing to declare samples of frog embryos she had carried from France at the request of her boss at Harvard.

Such an infraction is normally considered minor, punishable with a fine of up to \$500. Instead,

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Brothers’ Hopes for Freedom
From left, Lyle and Erik Menendez, who have been model inmates, are seeking to be eligible for parole. PAGE A11

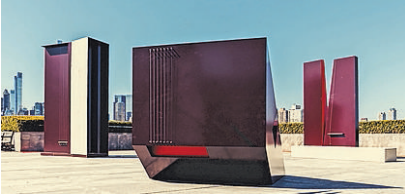
Musk Is Far Short of Goal
The head of DOGE says there will be less savings than promised. But even that estimate is inflated. PAGE A14

INTERNATIONAL A4-10

Canadian Trump Acolyte Lags
Pierre Poilievre, the Conservative seeking to become prime minister with a populist message, is trailing in the polls to the Liberal candidate. PAGE A4

Israel Bombs Gaza Hospital
The attack hit Ahli Arab Hospital, a mainstay of Gaza’s decimated health care system. Also, Israel expanded its occupation of the south. PAGE A7

U.K. Laws in Need of Refresh
Outdated legislation prevented police officers from rapidly correcting misinformation after a stabbing attack last summer, lawmakers said. PAGE A6



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Sculptures That Must Be Heard
Jennie C. Jones turns Minimalist works into sonic “wind” instruments for the Met Museum’s Roof Garden. PAGE C1

The Reality of ‘Warfare’
The filmmaker Alex Garland and the veteran Ray Mendoza team up to depict war as it is really experienced. PAGE C1

BUSINESS B1-6

U.S. Set to Challenge Meta
The tech giant will face off against the federal government in a landmark antitrust trial over claims that it illegally squashed competition. PAGE B1

SPORTS D1-8

The Next Star Among Many
Paige Bueckers, expected to be the top pick in the W.N.B.A. draft on Monday, will join the likes of standouts like Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese. PAGE D1

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David Broder PAGE A20



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‘Upstairs, Downstairs’ Force
Jean Marsh not only helped develop the hit 1970s show, but also acted in it, and had a decades-long career in film, TV and theater. She was 90. PAGE A19

