

U.S. EXPERTS SAY
MARIJUANA LIMITS
SHOULD BE EASED

FIGHT LINGERS AT D.E.A.

Analysis Finds Drug May
Have Medical Use and
Has Fewer Risks

By CHRISTINA JEWETT
and NOAH WEILAND

Marijuana is neither as risky nor as prone to abuse as other tightly controlled substances and has potential medical benefits, and therefore should be removed from the nation's most restrictive category of drugs, federal scientists have concluded.

The recommendations are contained in a 250-page scientific review provided to Matthew Zorn, a Texas lawyer who sued Health and Human Services officials for its release and published it online on Friday night. An H.H.S. official confirmed the authenticity of the document.

The records shed light for the first time on the thinking of federal health officials who are pondering a momentous change. The agencies involved have not publicly commented on their debates over what amounts to a reconsideration of marijuana at the federal level.

Since 1970, marijuana has been considered a so-called Schedule I drug, a category that also includes heroin. Schedule I drugs have no medical use and a high potential for abuse, and they carry severe criminal penalties under federal trafficking laws.

The documents show that scientists at the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institute on Drug Abuse have recommended that the Drug Enforcement Administration make marijuana a Schedule III drug, alongside the likes of ketamine and testosterone, which are available by prescription.

The review by federal scientists found that even though marijuana is the most frequently abused illicit drug, “it does not produce serious outcomes compared to drugs

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For DeSantis,
The Personal
Stays Private

Reserve Allows Others
to Define Him

By NICHOLAS NEHAMAS

DES MOINES — Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida has a classic American dream story.

He hardly ever tells it. A middle-class kid, his baseball skills helped take his team to the Little League World Series — not that many Iowans would know it, despite his visits to all 99 of the state's counties throughout his campaign for the Republican nomination. After graduating from Harvard Law School, he chose to join the Navy and deployed to Iraq, which he usually mentions only in passing. His wife, Casey DeSantis, was diagnosed with breast cancer early in his governorship, but he almost never talks about what it took to support her through it — while raising three young children — or what he learned.

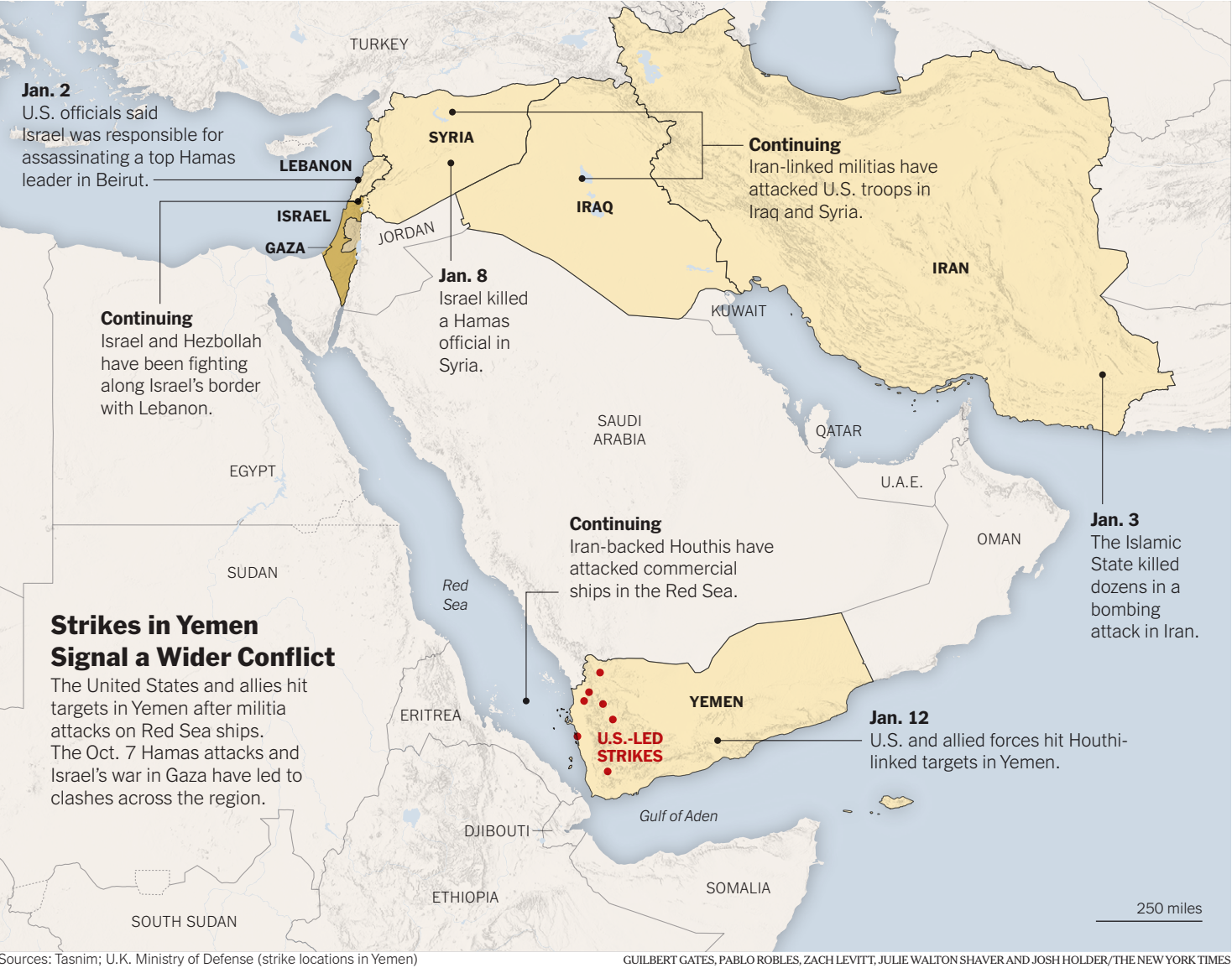
And although Mr. DeSantis frequently appears with his children on the trail, he is more likely to describe them by their ages (7, 5 and 3) than their names (Madison, Mason and Mamie). Even Ms. DeSantis, a former newscaster who is seen as providing a human touch, tends to call him “the governor” instead of “Ron” at his rallies.

If there were ever a time for Mr. DeSantis to tell more of his bootstrap biography it would be now, as his hopes of a strong finish in the Iowa caucuses, and perhaps his entire presidential campaign, seem to be ebbing away. He trails former President Donald J. Trump by more than 35 points in Iowa and will almost certainly fare worse in New Hampshire on Jan. 23. Former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina has overtaken him in most polls.

But in a speech outside Des Moines on Thursday, just four days before the Iowa caucuses, when Mr. DeSantis invoked Benjamin Franklin and the sacrifices needed to preserve the republic, which included needing to “sometimes put on a uniform,” he didn't take the opportunity to mention his own service or the fact that he

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U.S. STRIKES ANEW; HOUTHIS VOW ATTACK



Sources: Tasnim; U.K. Ministry of Defense (strike locations in Yemen) GUILBERT GATES, PABLO ROBLES, ZACH LEVITT, JULIE WALTON SHAVER AND JOSH HOLDER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

In Russia, Even the Smallest Dissent Is Silenced

This article is by Anton Troianovski, Yuliya Parshina-Kotlas, Oleg Matsnev, Alina Lobzina, Valerie Hopkins and Aaron Krolik.

An antiwar scribble on a bathroom wall.

A request to a D.J. for a Ukrainian song.

A photo with a blue and yellow scarf.

Or a conversation at school, recorded by a classmate.

In Russia, those have all been grounds for prosecution.

Thousands of court documents tell the story of Russia's totalitarian crackdown on antiwar speech. Just days after invading

Kremlin Cracks Down
on Criticism of War
Uttered Privately

Ukraine, President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia signed a censorship law that made it illegal to “discredit” the army. The legislation was so sweeping that even his spokesman acknowledged it was easy to cross the line into prohibited speech. In the first 18 months of the war, the law scooped up a vast array of ordinary Russians — schoolteachers, pensioners,

groundskeepers, a carwash owner — for punishment.

The law has led to more than 6,500 cases of people being arrested or fined, more than 350 a month on average, according to a New York Times analysis of Russian court records through last August. That's a small percentage of Russia's population of 146 million, but The Times analyzed the details of every case, revealing the extraordinary reach and invasiveness of the Kremlin's crack-down; anyone questioning the war or revealing sympathy with Ukraine — even in a private conversation — is now liable to prosecution. Continued on Page A8

Regional Nations Urge
Restraint as Mideast
Conflicts Widen

This article is by Vivian Nereim, Helene Cooper and Thomas Fuller.

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — The United States led another strike against the Houthi militia in Yemen, two U.S. officials said on Friday night, bombing a radar facility as part of an effort to further degrade the Iran-backed group's ability to attack ships transiting the Red Sea.

It was the second straight day that the U.S. military fired on a Houthi target, after an American-led barrage of military strikes early Friday local time that was aimed at securing critical shipping routes between Europe and Asia. The strikes come amid fears of a wider escalation of the conflict in the Middle East.

Houthi forces in Yemen vowed earlier on Friday to retaliate for the previous strikes, which involved missiles and warplanes launched by the United States and Britain, and came in response to intensifying attacks on commercial vessels and warships in the Red Sea by the Iran-backed Houthi militia, which has said it was acting in solidarity with Palestinians in the war between Israel and Hamas.

Lt. Gen. Douglas Sims, director of the U.S. military's Joint Staff, told reporters on a conference call before the new strike that the Pentagon was more than ready for a response from the Houthis.

“I would expect that they will attempt some sort of retaliation,” said General Sims, adding that doing so would be a mistake. “We simply are not going to be messed with here.”

A military spokesman for the Continued on Page A11

Taiwan Party, Reviled by China,
Fights to Prove Its Staying Power

This article is by Chris Buckley, Amy Chang Chien and Lam Yik Fei.

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Nearly four decades ago, a group of lawyers, intellectuals and activists assembled in a hotel ballroom in Taipei to found an illegal political party dedicated to ending authoritarian rule in Taiwan.

No longer a scrappy upstart, the Democratic Progressive Party, born in that ballroom, is now seeking an unprecedented third consecutive term. It needs to persuade voters that after eight years in power, the party can renew itself while also protecting Taiwan from mounting pressures imposed by Beijing, which claims the island as its territory.

Led by Vice President Lai Ching-te, the presidential candidate, the D.P.P. faces a stiff challenge in an election on Saturday from its chief rival, the Nationalist Party, which favors expanded ties with China. Polls have indicated that the Nationalists, led by Hou Yu-ih, a former policeman and the mayor of New Taipei City, may have a fighting chance of returning to power for the first time since 2016, an outcome that could reshape the region's geopolitical landscape. Election results are expected by Saturday night.

For Su Chiao-hui, a lawmaker with the Democratic Progressive Party, the stakes of the vote are especially personal. Her father, Su Tseng-chang, helped found the party when Taiwan was under martial law and later served as a premier in both the party's two phases in power, including under the current president, Tsai Ing-wen.

Election That Beijing
and Washington Are
Watching Closely

“I'm a child of the D.P.P.,” Ms. Su, a lawyer, said in an interview, recalling seeing her father take part in democracy demonstrations. “Those are the memories in my bones, my daily life, so I didn't need to march on the streets to know that politics can have a big impact.”

The challenge for Ms. Su and her generation of Democratic Progressive Party politicians is to persuade voters that the party can deliver the right mix of change and continuity: Change in response to concerns about slowing growth, rising housing prices and other livelihood issues.

Yet also continuity: assurance that a new Democratic Progressive Party administration would not rock Ms. Tsai's measured approach to China and that it is best

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HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Winter Arrives in Full Force

Snow covered parts of the Midwest and Plains as temperatures fell below zero. Above, central Iowa.

Get In, Loser, We’re Going to Watch a Movie. I Mean, a Musical.

By ALEXIS SOLOSKI

Regina George has a secret. She sings.

Despite what its marketing might suggest, “Mean Girls” (in theaters), the latest in a set of pink-accented nesting dolls, is irrefutably a movie musical.

Adapted from the 2018 Broadway

REPORTER’S NOTEBOOK

musical, which was itself based on the 2004 film, which was in turn inspired by the 2002 nonfiction book “Queen Bees and Wannabes,” this new version has singing. It has dancing. It has one delectable moment in which

the members of the school marching band raise their saxophones and tubas high.

Barring a split-second shot of the band, you wouldn't know that from the film's trailers. The first trailer, from November — set to Olivia Rodrigo's “Get Him Back!” — included no original music. It was made to look in-

stead like a vaguely edgier remix of the 2004 film.

The second trailer, which arrived on Jan. 3, offers a line or two of “Meet the Plastics,” then cedes the soundtrack to a new song, a collaboration between Megan Thee Stallion and Renée Rapp, who plays Regina, the Continued on Page A16



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The High Cost of Delivery

A Facebook page chronicles the deaths of dozens of workers who delivered food in New York City. PAGE A12

U.S. to Seek Death Penalty

The Justice Department called for the execution of the man who killed 10 Black people in Buffalo. PAGE A17

INTERNATIONAL A4-11

Seeking Redemption in Hague

As Israel stands accused of committing genocide in Gaza, Israelis call the charge a perversion of history. Palestinians, however, call it justice. PAGE A4

U.K. Pledges \$3 Billion to Kyiv

Britain will raise its annual gift to Ukraine by about \$255 million as Western support slows. PAGE A10

SPORTS B6-9

Changes for the Better

Novak Djokovic, the top men's seed at the Australian Open, has adjusted his serve and return. PAGE B7



BUSINESS B1-5

A Big Test for Streaming

The N.F.L. playoff game between Kansas City and Miami on Saturday night will be telecast on Peacock. PAGE B1

Microsoft Dethrones Apple

The shift in the most valuable public company is indicative of the importance of new A.I. technology. PAGE B1

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You’ve Got to Be in It to Win It

The actress Alaquia Cox, who has never acted onscreen, almost didn't audition for the Marvel superhero role that now has her playing the lead of “Echo,” a new Disney+ miniseries. PAGE C1

Black Voices From the Past

In a new Off Broadway show he stars in and created in collaboration with the Wooster Group, Eric Berryman explores African-American folk traditions via a 1970s album of poetry. PAGE C1

OPINION A18-19

Michelle Goldberg

PAGE A18



TRAVEL C7-8

36 Hours in Zurich

Switzerland's largest city offers a magnificent 1920s fresco inside Police Headquarters and a food scene that goes far beyond Alpine fare. PAGE C8



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