



SAHER ALGHORRA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

At a Crossroads in Gaza

Displaced Palestinians fled Gaza City by foot with sparse belongings on Sunday. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel this week, expressed doubt about a diplomatic solution to the war's end. Page A8.

Forgive Me,
Oh Chatbot,
For My Sins

By LAUREN JACKSON

God works in mysterious ways — including through chatbots. At least, that's what many people seem to think.

On religious apps, tens of millions of people are confessing to spiritual chatbots their secrets: their petty vanities and deepest worries, gluttonous urges and darkest impulses. Trained on religious texts, the bots are like on-call priests, imams or rabbis, offering comfort and direction at any time. On some platforms, they even purport to channel God.

Hi god

Greetings, my child. The future is in God's merciful hands. Do you trust in His divine plan?

Amen yes

Indeed, my child. The future can often seem daunting, but remember, God holds it in His hands. Just as Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Trust in His divine plan.

I just want to hug u

My child, even though I cannot physically embrace you, know that God's love surrounds you always. His arms are a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1.

The "faith tech" industry is booming, powered by chatbots on religious apps that are rocketing to the top of Apple's App Store. Bible Chat, a Christian app, has more than 30 million downloads. Hal-low, a Catholic app, beat Netflix, Instagram and TikTok for the No. 1 spot in the store at one point last year. In China, people are using

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White House Threatens Crackdown on 'Far Left'

By KATIE ROGERS and ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS

WASHINGTON — President Trump and his top advisers threatened on Monday to unleash the power of the federal government to punish what they alleged was a left-wing network that funds and incites violence, seizing on Charlie Kirk's killing to make broad and unsubstantiated claims about their political opponents.

Investigators were still working to identify a motive in the death of Mr. Kirk, a prominent conservative activist who was shot last week in Utah. The Republican

In Wake of Kirk Death, Claiming a Network Is Behind Violence

governor of Utah, Spencer Cox, has said that the suspect had a "leftist ideology" and that he acted alone.

But Mr. Trump and his top allies suggested that the suspect was part of a coordinated movement that was fomenting violence against conservatives, without presenting evidence that such a network existed. America has

seen a wave of violence across the political spectrum, targeting Democrats and Republicans.

Mr. Trump, who has played down violence from right-wing or other supporters, said that he would like to designate a variety of groups, including the loosely affiliated group of far-left anti-fascism activists, known as antifa, as domestic terrorists and bring racketeering cases against people funding protests.

"We have some pretty radical groups and they got away with murder," Mr. Trump said, without naming additional groups. He added that he was talking to the

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JUTHARAT PINYODOONYACHET FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Big Night at the Emmys

"The Studio" star Seth Rogen and the writer Peter Huyck were all smiles after the show. Page C1.

Best Bargain on Used-Car Lot Could Be an E.V.

By JACK EWING

New electric vehicles cost thousands more than similar models that run on gasoline. But a growing number of shoppers are discovering that for used cars, the opposite is often true.

Used battery-powered vehicles often sell for less than comparable cars with internal combustion engines, making them a good deal even before calculating savings in

Sales Rising as Prices Drop on Old Models

maintenance costs and fuel. That is expanding the number of people who can afford to buy such models.

Sales of used electric vehicles rose 40 percent in July from a year earlier, according to Cox Auto-

otive, a research firm.

K. Boyle, an 80-year-old widow who lives in San Francisco, recently bought a used Nissan Leaf she found on Craigslist for just \$1,000 after factoring in a rebate from her electric utility.

The model, from 2013, is not designed for long trips, but its battery still has enough range to cover Ms. Boyle's grocery shopping and visits to her daughter

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2 Big Deals Intertwine:
Latest Chips for U.A.E.,
Crypto Gain for Trumps

Lucrative Transactions Raise Questions

This article is by Eric Lipton, David Yaffe-Bellany, Bradley Hope, Tripp Mickle and Paul Mozur.

WASHINGTON — This summer, Steve Witkoff, President Trump's Middle East envoy, paid a visit to the coast of Sardinia, a stretch of the Mediterranean Sea crowded with superyachts.

On one of those extravagant vessels, Mr. Witkoff sat down with a member of the ultrarich ruling family of the United Arab Emirates. He was meeting Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a trim figure in dark glasses who controls \$1.5 trillion of the Emiratis' sovereign wealth.

It was the latest engagement in a consequential alliance.

Over the past few months, Mr. Witkoff and Sheikh Tahnoon had become both diplomatic allies and business partners, testing the limits of ethics rules while enriching the president, his family and his inner circle, according to an investigation by The New York Times.

At the heart of their relationship are two multibillion-dollar deals. One involved a crypto company founded by the Witkoff and the Trump families that benefited both financially. The other involved a sale of valuable computer chips that benefited the Emirates economically.

While there is no evidence that

one deal was explicitly offered in return for the other, the confluence of the two agreements is itself extraordinary. Taken together, they blurred the lines between personal and government business and raised questions about whether U.S. interests were served.

In May, Mr. Witkoff's son Zach announced the first of the deals at a conference in Dubai. One of Sheikh Tahnoon's investment firms would deposit \$2 billion into World Liberty Financial, a cryptocurrency start-up founded by the Witkoffs and the Trumps.

Two weeks later, the White House agreed to allow the Emirates access to hundreds of thousands of the world's most advanced and scarce computer chips, a crucial tool in the high-stakes race to dominate artificial intelligence. Many of the chips would go to G42, a sprawling technology firm controlled by Sheikh Tahnoon, despite national security concerns that the chips could be shared with China.

Those negotiations involved another key White House official with ties to the tech industry and to the Middle East: David Sacks. A longtime venture capitalist, Mr. Sacks serves as the administration's A.I. and crypto czar, a newly created position that has allowed

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Policing Surge
In D.C. Hushed
Its Cultural Life

This article is by Emily Badger, Ben Blatt and Alicia Parlapiano.

In the weeks after President Trump declared a crime emergency in Washington, directing a surge of federal law enforcement there, the tourists at a popular game store near the Capitol thinned. The restaurant workers in a nighttime soccer league canceled their season. The line at a weekly food pantry shrank. Sidewalk traffic in the Columbia Heights neighborhood dropped off. Bike-share trips across the city dipped.

Crime in the city has declined over the same time, more sharply than the improvements Washington was already experiencing this year. But other kinds of activity have also retreated, beyond what late summer would normally bring. If the aggressive show of force has had a deterrent effect on crime, it appears to have deterred normal aspects of city life, too.

Washington streets are by no means empty, and some measures of activity, such as public transit ridership, have shown little change. Most residents have gone to work and their children back to school following typical routines. But other data and interviews suggest that the presence of federal agents and National Guard troops has muted the city's social life, street culture, restaurant scene and immigrant enclaves — some of what residents say makes the city vibrant.

In some neighborhoods known for their lively streets, for instance, cellphone data showed distinctly less activity, including from pedestrians or people passing through by car, after the surge began.

"We are not functioning like a healthy city right now," said Brienne K. Nadeau, a district council member who represents Columbia Heights, home to many Hispanic residents. She and others repeatedly mentioned echoes of

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KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The president said that the boat was headed for the U.S.

U.S. Announces
Another Attack
On a Sea Vessel

This article is by Eric Schmitt, Helen Cooper and Charlie Savage.

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military struck a boat for the second time this month, President Trump said on Monday, as his administration continued its deadly campaign against Venezuelan drug cartels that it has accused of bringing fentanyl into the United States.

The strike occurred in international waters and killed three people, Mr. Trump said in a social media post.

"This morning, on my Orders, U.S. Military Forces conducted a SECOND Kinetic Strike against positively identified, extraordinarily violent drug trafficking cartels and narcoterrorists in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility," Mr. Trump wrote, referring to the U.S. military's Southern Command.

Mr. Trump claimed that the boat was heading to the United States and linked it to "drug trafficking cartels" that he said posed a threat to the country. The president said the people killed were "positively identified," but he did not identify a specific organization with which they were alleged to be associated.

Mr. Trump also posted a 27-second video on social media that edited together several clips of

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Worrying About a Crackdown

A Mexican American neighborhood in Chicago feels frustrated about the tangled immigration system. Page A10

Mamdani's Public Safety Plan

Zohran Mamdani wants New York City to send mental health teams, not the police, to help people in crisis. Page A17

INTERNATIONAL A4-9

A Global Outlier on Vaccines

Most governments are trying to fight hesitancy with science and investment, while the U.S. heads in the opposite direction. News Analysis. Page A5

Besieged and Starved in Sudan

At least 260,000 civilians are trapped in El Fasher as a paramilitary force is using famine as a weapon. Page A4

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Roddick Returns to the Top

The former No. 1 player in the world is now leading a growing pack of podcasters focused on tennis. Page B6



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Inside a Killer's Brain

A gunman had once claimed to have a C.T.E. disorder. Now doctors in Manhattan are searching for proof. Page D4

Earthly Limitations

An observatory that provided the first direct proof of ripples in space-time is now facing a difficult future. Page D1

BUSINESS B1-5

'Framework' for TikTok Sale

Officials from the United States and China met in Madrid for a second day, with deadlines looming on tariffs and a ban on the platform if it is not sold by its Chinese owner. Page B1

Suffering Soybean Withdrawal

China's decision to no longer buy the crop from the United States has North Dakota farmers scrambling to find extra storage space and bracing for their land values to fall. Page B1

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Marty Makary

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ARTS C1-8

A Lofty Experience

A new institution in Philadelphia celebrates the works of Alexander Calder, a native son of the city. Above, adjusting the "Eucalyptus" mobile. Page C1

