

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times

THE WEATHER
Today, mostly sunny, breezy, cooler, high 68. **Tonight**, clear, low 50. **Tomorrow**, dry, cool, sunshine and patchy afternoon clouds, high 65. Weather map appears on Page B8.

VOL. CLXXV No. 60,659

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2025

Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00

Comey Is Stuck In Long Feud With President

A Bad Start Escalated Into an Indictment

By MAGGIE HABERMAN

It was not, to say the least, a great start to their relationship. James B. Comey, then the F.B.I. director, arrived at Trump Tower two weeks before Donald J. Trump would be inaugurated in 2017. On the agenda was a briefing for the incoming president by Mr. Comey and the intelligence community chiefs on their finding that Russia had interfered in the 2016 election to hurt Hillary Clinton.

But Mr. Comey also planned to give the president-elect some even more awkward news.

It was the first time they had met, and Mr. Comey’s message — that there was a document circulating in Washington full of salacious claims related to Mr. Trump and Russia — left Mr. Trump suspecting that the F.B.I. director was implicitly threatening him. Mr. Comey later said he believed he had no choice but to share the information, despite the possibility that Mr. Trump would take it as a demonstration of leverage over him.

Even before that first fraught encounter, their fates had been entangled by Mr. Comey’s decision in the campaign’s closing days to publicly reopen an inquiry into Mrs. Clinton’s use of a private email server, a choice that Democrats assailed and blamed for her defeat. And after the Trump Tower meeting, the two men would be set on a path of escalating conflict and mutual loathing that led last week to a prosecutor handpicked for the task by Mr. Trump securing an indictment of Mr. Comey.

It is a well-documented clash of two supremely self-confident figures now tied together in American history: Mr. Trump, intent on retribution and willing to roll over democratic norms of justice to do so, and Mr. Comey, the professed straight shooter whose judgment on politically explosive cases gave ammunition to detractors on both sides of the aisle. Neither man ever sought an off-ramp.

Seen in light of Mr. Trump’s finally securing an indictment against someone he perceives as a political enemy — the first time he has done so — their well-documented, yearslong face-off amounts to a case study of how Mr. Trump, far from moving on as he won political and legal victories, grew ever more emboldened to direct the Justice Department to carry out his revenge agenda.

Asked to comment, Abigail Jackson, a White House spokeswoman, said, “The indictment against Comey speaks for itself, *Continued on Page A15*



Senator John Thune, center, the majority leader, on Tuesday. Republicans and Democrats were far apart as midnight approached.

Top Military Leaders Told U.S. Cities Could Be ‘Training Grounds’

This article is by Helene Cooper, Eric Schmitt and Shawn McCreesh.

WASHINGTON — In the end, it was just another campaign-style presentation. President Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth recited a familiar litany of partisan culture war talking points in their highly anticipated call-up of several hundred military officers on Tuesday.

But in a rambling and sometimes incoherent speech in which he praised his own tariffs and insulted former President Joseph R. Biden Jr., Mr. Trump disclosed that he had told Mr. Hegseth to use American cities as “training grounds” for the military.

It was an evolution of one of Mr. Trump’s favorite themes — that cities run by Democrats are lawless, urban hellscape. But now he was telling military commanders charged with waging war his thinking on where their next deployments could be.

“It seems that the ones that are run by the radical left Democrats, what they’ve done to San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, they’re very unsafe places,” the president told the generals and admirals at a military base in Virginia. “And we’re going to straighten them out one by one, and this is going to be a major part for some of the people in this room.”

“That’s a war, too,” Mr. Trump said. “It’s a war from within.”

Mr. Trump’s comments were greeted by expressionless faces — the Pentagon’s senior military leaders had warned the officers not to react or cheer, per the norms of what is supposed to be a nonpartisan military. The result: the audience was quieter and much more still than Mr. Trump usually encounters in his stump speeches.

The news last week that Mr. Hegseth had hastily summoned hundreds of the country’s top brass to Marine Corps Base Quantico for a first-of-its-kind gathering

A Rare Gathering Hears Partisan Complaints

ing had led to a flurry of speculation and apprehension about what he had planned. More firings? A declaration of war on Venezuela? A loyalty pledge to the president?

Instead it was more criticism of the military, which Mr. Trump and Mr. Hegseth complained had, under their predecessors, been distracted by political correctness.

Mr. Hegseth, who spoke first, told the generals and admirals that he was tightening standards for fitness and grooming, cracking down even more rigorously against “woke garbage” and rejecting the notion of “toxic” leadership.

It was unclear why, with a shutdown of the federal government looming, Mr. Trump and his defense secretary decided to gather the country’s senior military leaders from deployments in the United States, Europe, Asia and

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The generals and admirals in Quantico, Va., on Tuesday were warned by senior leaders not to react.

Can College Students Mingle For an Hour Without Phones?

By CHRISTINA CARON

ORLANDO, Fla. — Nearly every student clutches a phone in one hand while traversing the University of Central Florida campus, even when walking in groups. Laptops and tablets are lunchtime companions, and earbuds and headphones are routine accessories. While waiting for class to start, many students sit in silence, drawn into their devices.

It is a familiar and exasperating scene for Sean Killingsworth, 22, a former U.C.F. student. “What is this life I’m signing up for?” he asked himself during his sophomore year. “It was just like, I’m talking to a bunch of zombies.”

Mr. Killingsworth craved a space where he could chat with his peers without feeling as though he was intruding. When he was in

high school, he ran into similar conundrums, so he would organize phone-free hangouts with friends.

Why not in college too?

In 2023, he helped bring the idea of no-phone social time to two different Florida campuses — U.C.F. and Rollins College. He called it the Reconnect Movement: During meetings, everyone was required to hand over their phone and socialize without devices, a concept that has become a big draw for like-minded students.

Reconnect has now spread to six schools in four states. And in September it broadened its reach beyond students, hosting a phone-free event in New York City — soon to be followed by events in Orlando and Tampa — that any

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Trump’s Poll Rating Is Low but Stable After a Summer of Turmoil

THE NEW YORK TIMES/SIENA POLL

April and September 2025

Voters’ Net Approval of Trump

Net approval is the share who said they approved of how President Trump is handling each issue, minus the share who said they disapproved.

ISSUE	NET APPROVAL	
	APRIL	SEPT.
His overall job as president	-12 pts.	-11 pts.
Crime	—	+1 pt.
Immigration	-4 pts.	-6 pts.
The economy	-12 pts.	-9 pts.
Managing the federal government	-8 pts.	-10 pts.
Trade with other countries	-11 pts.	-10 pts.
The war between Russia and Ukraine	-21 pts.	-20 pts.
The Israeli-Palestinian conflict	—	-19 pts.

Source: New York Times/Siena polls of registered voters nationwide conducted from April 21 to 24 and Sept. 22 to 27.

YUHAN LIU/THE NEW YORK TIMES

By SHANE GOLDMACHER and RUTH IGIELNIK

President Trump’s efforts to send National Guard troops to big cities, punish media organizations and pressure universities and private businesses are all unpopular with voters.

But the continued torrent of policies and tactics has not further weakened Mr. Trump’s overall standing, according to a new poll from The New York Times and Siena University. Instead, Mr. Trump continues to retain the support of roughly nine out of 10 Republican voters.

The net result: an unpopular president with an unchanged approval rating of 43 percent.

At the start of his term, Mr. Trump’s approval rating fell from its post-election highs, and it remains weak compared with his predecessors’ at this point in their presidencies. But over the last

several months, his rating has been resilient and stable, reflecting that most voters’ opinions on him have hardened.

The new poll came as the federal government was racing toward a shutdown on Wednesday, an impasse that would pose political risks for both Mr. Trump and congressional Democrats.

Voters said they would be likely to blame both sides if the government shut down. But independent voters said they were twice as likely to assign blame to Mr. Trump and Republicans than to Democrats. At the same time, two-thirds of voters warned that Democrats should not shut down the government if their demands were not met.

“It’s like a street gang fight,” Alvaro Olivares Rivera, a 40-year-old veteran who lives in Loveland, Colo., and relies on the Department of Veterans Affairs for dis-

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INTERNATIONAL A4-9

A Triumph for Netanyahu

In President Trump’s Gaza peace plan, the Israeli prime minister got almost everything he hoped for, despite mounting international isolation. *PAGE A6*

China Arms Fueled Border War

Beijing urged Cambodia and Thailand to end the conflict in July. But weeks earlier, it sent weapons to Cambodia, Thai intelligence reports show. *PAGE A9*

Getting Lunch to the 70th Floor

An informal network of last-mile runners closes the gap between harried delivery drivers and hungry office workers in a Shenzhen skyscraper. *PAGE A4*

NATIONAL A10-18

Judge Rebukes Trump’s Tactics

The administration used deportation threats to intimidate campus demonstrators into silence, he ruled. *PAGE A16*

A Conundrum for Memphis

The city has been drained by years of crime but is divided over a coming wave of federal forces. *PAGE A14*



SPORTS B7-11

Fresh Start for Fuzzy Faces

Under new leadership, the Islanders have ended their regular-season ban on beards. Long hair and high jersey numbers are back in style, too. *PAGE B7*

A Different Kind of Moneyball

Lavish spending does not buy a World Series trophy, but it might help a team buy a ticket to the postseason. *PAGE B10*

FOOD D1-8

The Busiest Restaurateur

Stephen Starr now operates 43 restaurants in six cities, generating \$400 million a year in revenue. *PAGE D1*

BUSINESS B1-6

Medical Claims Made Easier?

How doctors could help patients better understand the prior authorization process. Your Money. *PAGE B1*

Costs Soar in Coal Country

Nearly one out of five customers of the leading utility in West Virginia has a past-due electricity bill. *PAGE B1*



ARTS C1-8

Big Boost for St. Louis

The home of the city’s symphony orchestra has reopened in what the mayor called a “very, very rough year.” *PAGE C1*

Crime and Compassion

A play shows how a man who threw a fatal punch and the victim’s parents made an unlikely connection. *PAGE C1*

OPINION A22-23

Thomas L. Friedman *PAGE A22*

