



TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Infantry soldiers from Ukraine’s 28th Mechanized Brigade after an incoming mortar round at a front-line position outside Toretsk in October.

THE PARTNERSHIP

America’s Hidden Role in the Ukraine War

By ADAM ENTOUS

On a spring morning two months after Vladimir Putin’s invading armies marched into Ukraine, a convoy of unmarked cars slid up to a Kyiv street corner and collected two middle-aged men in civilian clothes.

Leaving the city, the convoy — manned by British commandos, out of uniform but heavily armed — traveled 400 miles west to the Polish border. The crossing was seamless, on diplomatic passports. Farther on, they came to the Rzeszów-Jasionka Airport, where an idling C-130 cargo plane waited.

The passengers were top Ukrainian generals.

Their destination was Clay Kaserne, the headquarters of U.S. Army Europe and Africa in Wiesbaden, Germany. Their mission was to help forge what would become one of the most closely guarded secrets of the war in Ukraine.

One of the men, Lt. Gen. Mykhaylo Zaborodskyi, remembers being led up a flight of stairs to a walkway overlooking the cavernous main hall of the garrison’s Tony Bass Auditorium. Before the war, it had been a gym, used for all-hands meetings, Army band performances and Cub Scout pinewood derbies. Now General Zaborodskyi peered down on officers from coalition nations, in a warren of makeshift cubicles, organizing the first Western shipments to Ukraine of M777 artillery batteries and 155-millime-

ter shells.

Then he was ushered into the office of Lt. Gen. Christopher T. Donahue, commander of the 18th Airborne Corps, who proposed a partnership.

Its evolution and inner workings visible to only a small circle of American and allied officials, that partnership of intelligence, strategy, planning and technology would become the secret weapon in what the Biden administration framed as its effort to both rescue Ukraine and protect the threatened post-World War II order.

Today that order — along with Ukraine’s defense of its land — teeters on a knife edge, as President Trump seeks rapprochement with Mr. Putin and

Continued on Page 13

COLLEGES APPLY POLICE TACTICS ON PROTESTERS

TRACKING VANDALISM

Major Shift in Schools’ Approach to Student Discipline Cases

By ISABELLE TAFT

At the University of Pennsylvania last fall, someone splattered red paint on a statue honoring Benjamin Franklin, the school’s founder.

Within hours, campus workers washed it off. But the university was eager to find the culprit.

A pro-Palestinian group had claimed responsibility on social media. The university examined footage and identified a student’s cellphone number using data from the campus Wi-Fi near the statue at the time it was vandalized. Campus police obtained a search warrant for T-Mobile’s call records for the phone, and later a warrant to seize the phone itself.

On Oct. 18 at 6 a.m., armed campus and city police appeared at the off-campus home of a student believed to be the phone’s owner. A neighbor said they shined lights into her bedroom window, holding guns. Then they entered the student’s apartment and seized his phone, according to a police filing.

Months later, the student has not been charged with any crime.

The Penn inquiry, which remains open, is one of several in which universities have turned to more sophisticated technology and shows of force to investigate vandalism and other property crimes related to pro-Palestinian demonstrations. (The student who had his phone seized did not respond to an interview request.)

Much of it happened even before President Trump returned to office. Since then, he has made clear he will use his power to force universities to take a hard line on protests. His administration has warned 60 universities that they could face penalties from inquir-

Continued on Page 26

UNDER PRESSURE Columbia’s president and two Harvard officials left their posts. PAGE 29

Silencing Radio Merely Fortifies Great Firewall

By LI YUAN

In December 1967, when he arrived at a snowy farm on China’s northeastern border with the Soviet Union, Xu Chenggang carried with him an electron tube to help him assemble a radio.

Mr. Xu, a 17-year-old Beijing native, would spend the next 10 years there, living in a horse stable and subjected to re-education and persecution for his anti-revolutionary thinking. One thing that got him through the cold, dark decade was the tube radio that brought him Voice of America programs.

He learned about the Prague Spring, the Watergate scandal and President Richard Nixon’s resignation, as well as criticisms of Chairman Mao Zedong’s Cultural Revolution. The radio was also used by his peers as evidence of what was called his thoughtcrime, which led them to torture him physically and mentally. But he never regretted it.

“Voice of America was my school,” said Mr. Xu, 74, who attended Tsinghua University

Continued on Page 8



SAI AUNG MAIN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The quake in Myanmar has killed at least 1,600 as a desperate search for survivors persists. Page 10.

After Quake Pummels Myanmar, Some See an Omen for the Junta

By HANNAH BEECH

The dust from the devastating earthquake on Friday was still churning in Myanmar when an existential question swirled into the mix: Could this fatal clash of tectonic plates, which added yet another layer of trauma to a country already plagued by civil war, also portend the demise of Myanmar’s ruling junta?

The earthquake, known to have killed at least 1,600 and probably many more than that, struck a day after Myanmar’s military regime celebrated the country’s 80th Armed Forces Day with a parade in Naypyidaw, the capital purpose-built by a previous group of generals.

The sequence of events was

hard to ignore.

Omens and rumors have long been prized in an authoritarian country with little free flow of information. When the ruling generals grabbed power four years ago, they sealed off the country and reverted to a reverence of superstition and propaganda. And earthquakes do figure into astrological almanacs that are well thumbed in Myanmar. A popular version states that an earthquake in March signals the destruction of cities, while one in July is an augury of kings and rulers deposed.

The junta’s stronghold remains in the cities, like in Mandalay, the second-largest in the country and

Continued on Page 10

Musk’s Millions and Liberal Anger Clash in Wisconsin’s Pivotal Judicial Election

By REID J. EPSTEIN

A few months ago, Wisconsin Democrats were raising plenty of money for this year’s pivotal State Supreme Court election, but they were struggling to persuade their voters to pay much attention.

Wisconsin Republicans had mo-

mentum from helping President Trump win their state in November but were on track to be outspent as usual by the more organized Democrats.

Then along came Elon Musk, the world’s richest man, who is both helping direct White House policy and running an outside po-

litical operation that has swiftly become the primary vehicle to power pro-Trump candidates.

Months after he spent more than \$250 million to return Mr. Trump to office, becoming the 2024 election’s biggest donor, Mr. Musk has shoveled more money than anyone else into the race for

control of a court poised to make decisions about abortion rights, redistricting and labor rights in a top battleground state. He has frequently posted about the contest on social media, held a livestream with his chosen candidate and is planning to visit Wisconsin on Sunday evening, two days before

the Tuesday election.

In doing so, Mr. Musk has made himself the face of a contest with significant real-world stakes, and turned it into a test of whether rising Democratic anger can eclipse a billionaire’s political machine.

A victory by the liberal candi-
Continued on Page 24

INTERNATIONAL 4-22

Afghan Students Abandoned

Trump administration policy reversals have left students stranded at the American University of Afghanistan in Qatar, and fearful. PAGE 4

Papal Doctor Saw a ‘Miracle’

The leader of Pope Francis’ medical team said the 88-year-old pontiff survived being near death, but he needs to change his vigorous habits. PAGE 6

Putting a Cork in Shipments

President Trump’s 200 percent tariff on wine remains just a threat. But jittery American importers have already paused orders from Tuscany. PAGE 6



NATIONAL 23-29

Tough Choice After Ramadan

Glazed or jelly? For many Muslim Americans, only one thing will do after 30 days of fasting: doughnuts. PAGE 27

Cost of Clearing Encampments

When heavy equipment removed tents in Atlanta, no one noticed that Cornelius Taylor was inside one of them. PAGE 23

METROPOLITAN

Spring Break for Teenagers

Seniors from some of the nation’s elite high schools travel each year to a luxury resort in the Bahamas, trips that make school officials cringe. PAGE 1

SUNDAY BUSINESS

A Controlling Longevity Guru

Bryan Johnson, the founder of the long-life start-up Blueprint, faces a backlash from employees over his confidentiality agreements. PAGE 6

SUNDAY OPINION

Matt Hongoltz-Hetling

PAGE 6



ARTS & LEISURE

Phylicia Rashad, on ‘Purpose’

The Tony Award-winning actress and television star is making her Broadway directing debut. PAGE 4

A Band’s Brighter Days

Justin Vernon, the frontman of Bon Iver, has reinvented himself. That’s evident on the group’s new album. PAGE 7

SUNDAY STYLES

Hitting a Career Wall

Just when they should be reaching their professional peak, some Generation X workers in creative fields say they are finding that their skills have become all but obsolete. PAGE 10

Posing, Then a Problem

A thirsty student in a Bikram yoga class took a drink of water. That decision touched off a series of events, and one TikTok video, that resulted in an instructor losing her job. PAGE 1

