



AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Warnings Circulated for Years Before a Fatal Crash in D.C.

By EMILY STEEL and SYDNEY EMBER

On a bright, clear morning in July 2018, three military helicopters traveling south along the Potomac River came seconds away from smashing into a plane that was arriving at Ronald Reagan National Airport. The air traffic controller had failed to warn the aircraft of the potential collision, and the helicopters had to maneuver abruptly to avoid a crash.

The Federal Aviation Administration documented the incident in safety reports and used it as a case study in a nationwide

Incident in 2018 Highlighted Challenges Near Airport

training course for air traffic controllers on how to issue precise warnings to pilots when they are in danger.

But problems with air traffic around Reagan National persisted. Controllers, pilots and military officials were so worried about busy helicopter routes near the airport that they formed safety groups in attempts to prevent a crash, four people familiar with

the discussions said.

And after a series of incidents, an internal report in 2019 explicitly warned that recurring controller error increased “the risk of a collision and loss of life,” according to a copy reviewed by The New York Times.

Despite these efforts, an Army Black Hawk helicopter slammed into American Airlines Flight 5342 two weeks ago at almost exactly the same location as the 2018 incident, killing all 67 people aboard both aircraft.

The crash was the culmination of mounting warning signs at Reagan National, according to people familiar with the developments.

The serial resignations represent the most high-profile public resistance so far to President Trump’s tightening control over the Justice Department. They were a stunning repudiation of the administration’s attempt to force the dismissal of the charges against Mr. Adams.

The departures of the U.S. attorney, Danielle R. Sassoon, and the officials who oversaw the Justice Department’s Public Integrity Section, Kevin O. Driscoll and John Keller, came in rapid succession on Thursday. Days earlier, the acting No. 2 official at the Justice Department, Emil Bove III,

JUSTICE OFFICIALS RESIGN IN PROTEST OVER ADAMS CASE

U.S. Attorney’s Letter Claims Mayor Had ‘Quid Pro Quo’ With White House

This article is by William K. Rashbaum, Benjamin Weiser, Jonah E. Bromwich and Maggie Haberman.

Manhattan’s U.S. attorney on Thursday resigned rather than obey an order from a top Justice Department official to drop the corruption case against New York City’s mayor, Eric Adams.

Then, when Justice Department officials transferred the case to the public integrity section in Washington, which oversees corruption prosecutions, the two men who led that unit also resigned, according to five people with knowledge of the matter.

Several hours later, three other lawyers in the unit also resigned, according to people familiar with the developments.

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The departures of the U.S. attorney, Danielle R. Sassoon, and the officials who oversaw the Justice Department’s Public Integrity Section, Kevin O. Driscoll and John Keller, came in rapid succession on Thursday. Days earlier, the acting No. 2 official at the Justice Department, Emil Bove III,

had ordered Manhattan prosecutors to drop the case against Mr. Adams.

The agency’s justification for dropping the case was explicitly political; Mr. Bove had argued that the investigation would prevent Mr. Adams from fully cooperating with Mr. Trump’s immigration crackdown. Mr. Bove made a point of saying that Washington officials had not evaluated the strength of the evidence or the legal theory behind the case.

Ms. Sassoon, in a remarkable letter addressed to Attorney General Pam Bondi, said that Mr. Bove’s order to dismiss the case was “inconsistent with my ability and duty to prosecute federal crimes without fear or favor and

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KENT NISHIMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
Danielle R. Sassoon, Manhattan’s U.S. attorney, resigned.

‘Of Course’ Ukraine Will Have Role in Peace Talks, Trump Says

This article is by Jeanna Smialek, Zolan Kanno-Youngs, Matthew Mpoke Bigg and Thomas Fuller.

WASHINGTON — President Trump on Thursday offered reassurances that Ukraine would be involved in negotiations to end the war with Russia, a day after his remarks left that prospect in doubt and alarmed officials in Kyiv and Ukraine’s European allies that they would be left out of peace talks.

“Of course they would,” Mr. Trump said in response to a re-

porter’s question in the Oval Office in Washington about whether Ukraine would have a place at the table. “I mean, they’re part of it. We would have Ukraine, we would have Russia, and we would have other people involved, too.”

European leaders on Thursday demanded a role in any discussions between Mr. Trump and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia to end the conflict, negotiations that could set the terms of peace and redraw the map of Europe.

Some of the closest allies of the United States, including Britain

European Leaders Also Say They Must Not Be Left Out

and Germany, were among those asserting that Ukraine — and their own countries — had a right to be at the negotiating table.

“Europe must be involved in the negotiations — and I think that’s very easy to understand,” said Boris Pistorius, Germany’s de-

fense minister. The continent, he said, “will have to live directly” with the consequences of any deal, and may have “to play a central or the main role in the peace order.”

Mr. Pistorius and other NATO defense ministers made their comments at a meeting in Brussels on Thursday, a day after Pete Hegseth, the U.S. defense secretary, said a return to Ukraine’s pre-2014 borders would be “unrealistic” and Mr. Trump held a lengthy phone call with Mr. Putin

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Kennedy Wins Slim Approval In Health Post

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG

WASHINGTON — Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the vaccine skeptic and former presidential candidate who fled his family’s party and threw his “medical freedom” movement behind President Trump, won Senate confirmation as the nation’s health secretary on Thursday and was sworn in hours later during an Oval Office ceremony.

The ceremony, conducted by Justice Neil M. Gorsuch as Mr. Trump looked on, capped a remarkable rise for Mr. Kennedy and a curious twist in American politics. He was confirmed by a Republican Senate, without a single Democratic vote, in a chamber where his father, Robert F. Kennedy, and his uncles, John F. Kennedy and Edward M. Kennedy, all held office as Democrats.

During the ceremony, Mr. Kennedy remarked that he first visited the Oval Office as a child in 1961, the year John F. Kennedy became president. He said Mr. Trump, whose presidential campaign he joined in August after abandoning his own, had been a blessing in his life: “On Aug. 23 of last year, God sent me President Trump.”

Mr. Trump said he intended to sign an executive order establishing the President’s Commission to Make America Healthy Again, named for the moniker Mr. Kennedy has given his movement. Of Mr. Kennedy, he said, “There’s no better person to lead our campaign of historic reforms and historic faith in American health care.”

The Senate vote to confirm Mr. Kennedy, 52 to 48, was almost entirely along party lines. Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, a polio survivor and the former G.O.P. leader, voted no, the lone Republican to oppose Mr. Kennedy.

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President Aims His Tariff Policy At Rest of Globe

By ANA SWANSON

WASHINGTON — President Trump on Thursday set in motion a plan for new tariffs on other countries globally, an ambitious move that could shatter the rules of international trading and is likely to set off furious negotiations.

The president directed his advisers to come up with new tariff levels that take into account a range of trade barriers and other economic approaches adopted by America’s trading partners. That includes not only the tariffs that other countries charge the United States, but also the taxes they charge on foreign products, the subsidies they give their industries, their exchange rates and other behaviors the president deems unfair.

The president has said the step was necessary to even out America’s “unfair” relationships and stop other countries from taking advantage of the United States on trade. But he made clear that his ultimate goal was to force companies to bring their manufacturing back to the United States.

“If you build your product in the United States, there are no tariffs,” he said during remarks in the Oval Office.

Howard Lutnick, the president’s nominee for commerce secretary, said the measures could be ready as soon as April 2. He will oversee the plan along with Jamieson Greer, Mr. Trump’s pick for trade representative, and other advisers.

The decision to rework the tariffs that America charges on imported goods would represent a dramatic overhaul of the global trading system. For decades, the United States has set its tariff levels through negotiations at international trade bodies like the World Trade Organization.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKE BELLEME FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The city of New Bern, N.C., where Nicholas Sparks moved decades ago, has become a thriving arts scene and a beacon for his readers.

Forget Paris: A Romance Novelist’s Fans Flock to North Carolina

By EDUARDO MEDINA

NEW BERN, N.C. — Before Brittnee Provencher fell in love, before saying “I do” to her husband on their wedding day, she was a teenage girl in Norwich, Conn., getting lost in the books of one of the world’s best-known romance novelists: Nicholas Sparks.

She had relished every love story he wrote, many of which either mentioned or were based in New Bern, N.C., a small city wedged between two rivers, where Mr. Sparks had moved decades ago.

Years later, when Ms. Provencher was eager to find a new home where her own story could unfurl, she proposed an idea to her then-fiancé, Ian. What if they

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

moved to New Bern, stepping into the real-life version of a Sparks novel? In 2021, they packed their bags, stacked Mr. Sparks’s books in the trunk and drove down.

The Provenchers, who eventually got married in New Bern, are not the only ones who have

sought out the city of about 31,000 in eastern North Carolina, chasing the Southern romanticism that oozes from the books. Every year, local officials said, hundreds of couples and Sparks fans visit New Bern to experience its old-fashioned charm, and to explore why it inspired “The Notebook” and other heart-

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Toast, Trees and Wassailing
A centuries-old tradition to dispel evil spirits and the winter blues is making a comeback in rural England. PAGE A4

Disinformation in Germany
Russian influence campaigns have propagated wild claims about politicians ahead of a major vote. PAGE A6

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Troops at Guantánamo
Venezuelan migrants are being held by military guards in Cuba, where their wartime prison built to hold Qaeda suspects is in disrepair. PAGE A14

Increase in Infant Mortality
Infant mortality increased along with births in most states with abortion bans in the first 18 months after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. PAGE A19

Defense Secretary Shifts Focus
Pete Hegseth has spent much of his first weeks in office highlighting culture wars while saying little about America’s adversaries. PAGE A14



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Some see an opening for the tulip to usurp the rose as the flower of choice for the holiday dedicated to love. PAGE B1

Cuts May Help ‘X Money’
Former C.F.P.B. officials see Elon Musk’s goal of hobbling the agency as a boon to his own business visions. PAGE B1

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A Hero’s Return Sparks Hope
Among the Jets’ alumni who played alongside Aaron Glenn, the new head coach, there is a sense that something special is about to happen. PAGE B6

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Posters Evince Psychedelic Era
David Edward Byrd’s designs for Jimi Hendrix, the Who and others captured rock’s energy. His image for the musical “Follies” was a hit. He was 83. PAGE B10

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A Star Reaching New Heights
Idina Menzel scales an enormous tree, and a mountain of songs, in the new Broadway musical “Redwood,” a tale of trauma and resilience. PAGE C1

