

How U.S. Cut Deal to Oust Venezuelans
Leader of El Salvador Had to Be Won Over

This article is by Zolan Kanno-Youngs, Hamed Aleaziz, Alan Feuer, Devlin Barrett, Julie Turke-witz, Jonathan Swan, Maggie Har-berman and Annie Correal.

WASHINGTON — As they ad-dressed reporters inside the Oval Office in mid-April, President Trump and his Salvadoran coun-terpart appeared to be operating in lock step.
The United States had just de-ported more than 200 migrants to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador, and President Nayib Bukele said his country was eager to take more. He scoffed at a ques-tion from a reporter about whether he would release one of the men who a federal judge said had been mistakenly deported.
“I mean, we’re not very fond of releasing terrorists into our coun-try,” Mr. Bukele said.
But weeks earlier, when the three planes of deportees landed, it was the Salvadoran president who had quietly expressed con-cerns.
As part of the agreement with the Trump administration, Mr. Bukele had agreed to house only what he called “convicted crimi-nals” in the prison. However, many of the Venezuelan men la-beled gang members and terror-ists by the U.S. government had not been tried in court.
Mr. Bukele wanted assurances from the United States that each of those locked up in the prison was a member of Tren de Aragua, the transnational gang with roots in Venezuela, according to people familiar with the situation and documents obtained by The New York Times.
The matter was urgent, a senior U.S. official warned his colleagues shortly after the deportations, kicking off a scramble to get the Salvadorans whatever evidence they could.
Mr. Bukele’s demands for more information about some of the de-portees, which have not been pre-viously reported, deepen ques-tions about whether the Trump administration sufficiently as-sessed those it dispatched to a for-eign prison.
The New York Times pieced to-gether the most complete account yet of the U.S. arrangement with El Salvador and the March 15 de-portations from internal govern-ment documents, court filings and interviews with 22 people familiar with the operation or legal chal-lenges, many of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid retaliation.
For months, aides to Mr. Trump

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DENIED A Texas court struck down deportations under the Alien Enemies Act. PAGE A12



A Black Hawk helicopter and a passenger jet collided on Jan. 29 over the Potomac River near Ronald Reagan National Airport in Arlington, Va., killing 64 on the jet and three in the copter.

Missteps in Crash Expose Deadly Risk Posed by Common Practice in Aviation

Experts Have Warned ‘Visual Separation’ Can Go Wrong

By KATE KELLY and MARK WALKER

WASHINGTON — As they flew south along the Potomac River on the gusty night of Jan. 29, the crew aboard an Army Black Hawk helicopter attempted to execute a common aviation practice. It would play a role in ending their lives.
Shortly after the Black Hawk passed over Washington’s most famous array of cherry trees, an air traffic controller at nearby Ronald Reagan National Airport alerted the crew to a regional passenger jet in its vicinity. The crew acknowl-edged seeing traffic nearby.
One of the pilots then asked for permission to employ a practice called “visual separation.” That allows a pilot to take control of navigating around other aircraft, rather than relying on the control-ler for guidance.
“Visual separation approved,” the controller replied.
The request to fly under those rules is granted routinely in airspace overseen by controllers. Most of the time, visual separation is executed without note. But when mishandled, it can also

create a deadly risk — one that aviation experts have warned about for years.
On Jan. 29, the Black Hawk crew did not exe-cute visual separation effectively. The pilots ei-ther did not detect the specific passenger jet the controller had flagged, or could not pivot to a safer position. Instead, one second before 8:48 p.m., the helicopter slammed into American Airlines Flight 5342, which was carrying 64 people to Washing-ton from Wichita, Kan., killing everyone aboard both aircraft in a fiery explosion that lit the night sky over the river.
The New York Times examined public records and interviewed more than 50 aviation experts and officials, including some with extensive knowledge of the events, to piece together the most complete understanding yet of factors that contributed to the crash.
Up to now attention has focused on the Black Hawk’s altitude, which was too high and placed the helicopter directly in the jet’s landing path at National Airport. But The Times found new de-tails that show that the failures were far more complex than previously known.
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PRESIDENT DROPS WALTZ AS ADVISER IN FIRST SHAKE-UP

Pressure Rose After Group Chat Leak — Rubio Will Cover Security Role

This article is by Maggie Har-berman, David E. Sanger and Jona-than Swan.

President Trump on Thursday removed his national security ad-viser, Michael Waltz, and nomi-nated him as ambassador to the United Nations, the first signifi-cant personnel overhaul of top White House aides and the kind of shake-up that Mr. Trump had sought to avoid in his second term.
Secretary of State Marco Rubio will serve as interim national security adviser and will remain the nation’s top diplomat, Mr. Trump said.
“From his time in uniform on the battlefield, in Congress and, as my National Security Advisor, Mike Waltz has worked hard to put our Nation’s Interests first,” Mr. Trump wrote in a post on so-cial media. “I know he will do the same in his new role.”
Mr. Waltz had been on thin ice as national security adviser for months, but his position became more precarious after revelations that he organized a group chat on the commercial messaging app Signal to discuss a sensitive mili-tary operation in Yemen and ac-cidentally included a journalist in the conversation. His job was saved at the time in part because Mr. Trump, aides said, did not want to be seen as giving in to the news media by firing Mr. Waltz.
By then, most of Mr. Trump’s advisers had already viewed him as too hawkish to work for a presi-dent who campaigned as a skeptic of American intervention abroad and was eager to reach a nuclear deal with Iran and normalize re-lations with Russia.
Mr. Waltz’s deputy, Alex Wong,

who worked on North Korea is-sues in Mr. Trump’s first term and who is considered a more moder-ate Republican with substantial national security experience, is also expected to be removed, ac-cording to a senior administration official with knowledge of the situ-ation. The official and others spoke on the condition of an-onymity to describe the internal discussions.
Mr. Rubio now has a lengthy list of job titles. He holds the positions of secretary of state and national security adviser, something that no other official has done simulta-neously since Henry Kissinger under the Nixon and Ford admin-istrations. Mr. Rubio has also been serving as the acting head of both the gutted U.S.A.I.D. and the Na-tional Archives.
The Kissinger experiment has not been considered a success by most historians. The national security adviser is supposed to help

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Michael Waltz is now the pick for ambassador to the U.N.

Online Sellers Dread Closing Of a Loophole

By DANIELLE KAYE

Small-ticket items shipped to the United States from China will no longer be exempt from tariffs starting on Friday, when a deci-sion by President Trump to shut-ter a shipping loophole he calls a “scam” takes effect.
The move is expected to send ripples through the economy as American consumers, who have gotten used to buying cheap shoes, Hawaiian shirts, holiday decorations and other products made in China suddenly find those products much pricier. The fallout is also expected to extend to inde-pendent online vendors who have based their businesses on the abil-ity to cheaply import Chinese-made goods.
Mr. Trump is set to scrap a ship-ping workaround that has allowed products made in China and val-ued at under \$800 to come into the United States without being sub-ject to duties and taxes. The Trump administration has said it was focused on eliminating the so-called de minimis loophole be-cause of its apparent ties to the fentanyl trade, a concern previ-ously raised by the Biden admin-istration and several advocacy groups.
Traditional retailers that typi-cally send big bulk shipments to their warehouses have also ex-pressed frustration with the work-around, which has allowed popu-lar Chinese e-commerce sites like Temu and Shein to cheaply send packages directly to customers. Retailers like Walmart and Ama-

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Minerals Deal Invests Trump In Kyiv Future

By KIM BARKER

KYIV, Ukraine — The miner-als deal signed between the United States and Ukraine on Wednesday could bring untold money into a joint investment fund between the two countries that would help rebuild Ukraine whenever the war with Russia ends.
But Ukraine’s untapped re-sources that are the subject of the deal will take years to extract and yield profits. And those could fail to deliver the kind of wealth that President Trump has long said they would.
It is not yet clear how the nine-page deal, the text of which Ukraine’s government made public on Thursday, will work in practice. Many specifics need to be worked out, but the deal will set up an investment fund, jointly managed by Kyiv and Washing-ton.
Although the Trump adminis-tration had wanted Kyiv to use its mineral wealth to repay past U.S. military assistance, the final text removes the idea of treating that aid as debt. The deal also seemed to specifically keep the door open for Ukraine to eventu-ally join the European Union, a move that neither the United States nor Russia has opposed.
There was no mention of a security guarantee — which Ukraine had long sought to pre-vent Russia from regrouping after any cease-fire. But the deal does mean that the United States

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Hey, No Texting During the Movie! (Unless It’s With a Chatbot.)

By BROOKS BARNES

LOS ANGELES — Should peo-ple be able to use their phones af-ter the lights go down in movie theaters?
Hollywood has pondered that question for years as a way to make moviegoing more appeal-ing to teenagers and young adults. Because cinephiles have always responded with venom, to put it mildly, the answer has always been an emphatic “no.”
But desperate times call for des-perate measures.
Despite recent successes like “A Minecraft Movie” and “Sinners,” the North American box office is down 33 percent from 2019 — just before the pandemic sped up a consumer shift to streaming — ac-cording to Comscore, which com-

piles box office data.
So on Wednesday, Blumhouse, the horror studio affiliated with Universal Pictures, teamed up with Meta to experiment with a technology called Movie Mate. It’s a chatbot that encourages people to tap, tap, tap on hand-held small screens as they watch films on a big one. Users gain access to ex-clusive trivia and witticisms in real time (synced with what’s hap-pening in the movie). Meta, the owner of Facebook and Insta-gram, has positioned Movie Mate as a way “to get audiences back in theaters.”
Nearly 20 percent of moviego-ers ages 6 to 17 already send text messages during movies even though it’s against the rules, ac-cording to data from the National

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A screening of “M3GAN” offered the ability to message a chatbot while watching, with trivia and witticisms synced up to the film.

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Google Case May Tip A.I. Race
A landmark antitrust lawsuit about a company’s past has turned into a fight about the future. PAGE B1

Christmas Toys at Risk
Manufacturers and stores are freezing orders, predicting shortages and high prices caused by tariffs. PAGE B1



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Upending Ban on Gas Cars
The House voted 246 to 164 to bar Cali-fornia from imposing its landmark ban on the sale of new gasoline-powered vehicles by 2035. PAGE A17

Alarm at Campus Investigation
A Justice Department order to look into students involved in the Columbia protests worried career employees who saw it as politically motivated. PAGE A17

Rallying for the Rule of Law
About 1,500 demonstrators, many of them lawyers in suits and ties, jammed Manhattan’s Foley Square as part of the National Law Day of Action. PAGE A12

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Despair in Idyllic Kashmir
A terrorist massacre has amplified the alienation long felt in a region under tight watch and limited rights. PAGE A6

Trump Firm’s Overseas Ties
A newly agreed Trump Organization deal in Qatar is the latest in a series tied to foreign governments. PAGE A10

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Brought Rambo to the Screen
Ted Kotcheff also directed “Weekend at Bernie’s” and was an executive producer of “Law & Order: Special Victims Unit.” He was 94. PAGE A24

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Where an Artist Could Shine
A new Met exhibit explores John Singer Sargent’s years in Paris, and his famed painting “Madame X.” PAGE C1

Wide-Open Race for Tonys
Sarah Snook, in “The Picture of Dorian Gray,” below, joined George Clooney and others who earned nominations. PAGE C1



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Baffert at Derby as Exile Ends
“I just want to move forward,” Bob Baf-fert, trainer of six Kentucky Derby win-ners, said after a three-year ban. PAGE B7

New Soccer Gender Rules
The sport’s governing body in England said that it would prohibit transgender women from competing. PAGE B10

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Julia Angwin PAGE A26

