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Nikki Haley’s campaign is fighting for survival in South Carolina as grass-roots conservatives have left her for Donald J. Trump.

Jurors Decide
N.R.A. Leader
Misused Funds

This article is by Jesse McKinley, Liset Cruz and Kate Christobek.

In a sweeping rebuke of the National Rifle Association, the nation’s most prominent gun rights group, a Manhattan jury ruled on Friday that its leaders had engaged in a yearslong pattern of financial misconduct and corruption.

The jury, after a week of deliberations, found that the group’s former leader, Wayne LaPierre, had used N.R.A. funds to pay for personal expenses, including vacations, luxury flights for his relatives and yacht rides, and that two other top executives had failed in their duties to the nonprofit organization.

The case, brought by New York’s attorney general, Letitia James, touched the uppermost echelons of the gun-rights group. In addition to Mr. LaPierre, the defendants included the group’s former treasurer, Wilson Phillips, and its general counsel, John Frazer, who still works for the group. The N.R.A. itself was also a defendant, and was found to have ignored whistle-blower complaints and submitted false filings to the state.

The N.R.A. has been one of the most powerful lobbying groups in American politics, pushing for an expansive view of Second Amendment rights and fighting any measure meant to restrain gun ownership.

Its success meant that firearms increasingly defined the terms of American political debate and the nation’s very culture. People began to regularly carry firearms at demonstrations. In the face of terrifying and deadly school shooting

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Lawmakers in Alabama Move to Protect I.V.F.

By EDUARDO MEDINA and EMILY COCHRANE

Alabama lawmakers are considering legislation that would protect in vitro fertilization, after a State Supreme Court ruling last week led some clinics to halt I.V.F. treatments and left many women in limbo.

The ruling, which declared that frozen embryos should be legally considered children, set off a scramble among leaders in both parties to preserve access to a crucial reproductive treatment for families who have struggled with infertility and for L.G.B.T.Q. couples who are seeking to have children.

G.O.P. Seeks Distance
From Ruling Calling
Embryo a Child

The court’s ruling, handed down by an 8-to-1 majority, applies only to three couples who were suing a fertility clinic over the accidental destruction of their embryos. But its wording — paired with a fiery opinion from the chief justice encouraging lawmakers to push its scope further — has left many wondering about the possible wider implications for people seeking I.V.F. treatment.

At least three major fertility clinics in Alabama have halted I.V.F. treatments this week as doctors and lawyers assess the possible consequences of the ruling. On Friday, a major embryo shipping company said that it also was “pausing” its business in Alabama.

In interviews this week, people across the state expressed a fear that the ruling would hinder their journeys to parenthood through I.V.F., a process that is already considered emotionally and physically painful.

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Deadly Fire in Spain

Construction materials may have contributed to a blaze that killed 10 people in Valencia. Page A8.

For Tea Party,
Shift to Trump
On Haley’s Turf

Early Leaders Sign On
to MAGA Movement

By CHARLES HOMANS

When Nikki Haley ran for governor of South Carolina in 2010, one of her early campaign stops was the Aiken, S.C., living room of Claude and Sunny O’Donovan.

Mr. O’Donovan, a co-founder of a local Tea Party group, had invited Ms. Haley and other candidates to make their case to the conservative activists of Aiken County, a heavily Republican enclave of golf courses and retirement communities. The crowd that gathered around the O’Donovans’ coffee table numbered only a couple of dozen. But the retired couple was smitten.

“We fell in love with her,” Mr. O’Donovan, 85, said. “She was a dynamite gal.”

A digital picture frame in the O’Donovans’ home still displays a photograph of Ms. Haley at the meeting. But on Feb. 24, when Ms. Haley faces Donald J. Trump in South Carolina’s Republican presidential primary, both of the O’Donovans plan to vote for Mr. Trump.

“I think he has the values of the Tea Party,” Mrs. O’Donovan, 84, said. “It was for the people, and I see Trump as being for the people.”

Recent polls show Mr. Trump leading Ms. Haley by 36 points in South Carolina. A decisive loss would move the Republican nomination further out of reach and provide a painful coda to her political career in her home state.

A Trump win in South Carolina would also write the final chapter of one of the most important political stories of the last decade: the story of how Mr. Trump entered politics amid a transformative grass-roots movement and then absorbed that movement into his own.

In the early years of Barack Obama’s presidency, the Tea Party movement channeled outrage over bank bailouts and right-wing animosity toward the new president and his policies into a wave of midterm triumphs, winning Republican majorities in Congress and statehouses and minting a new generation of political stars, including Ms. Haley.

Four years later, initially skeptical Tea Partiers embraced Mr. Trump, who, as candidate and president, offered a supercharged version of the movement’s antipathy toward immigrants, fear of a changing country and anti-establishment fervor.

In Ms. Haley’s state, where the Tea Party movement was unusual

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NETANYAHU POSTS
OUTLINE FOR LIFE
IN POSTWAR GAZA

ISRAELI ARMY TO STAY

Buffer Zones and Rafah
Invasion Anger Allies
and Neighbors

By PATRICK KINGSLEY and THOMAS FULLER

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel released on Friday his most detailed vision yet for a postwar Gaza, pledging to retain indefinite military control over the enclave, while ceding the administration of civilian life to Gazans without links to Hamas.

The plan, if realized, would make it almost impossible to establish a Palestinian state including Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank, at least in the short term. That would likely accelerate a clash between Israel and a growing number of its foreign partners, including the United States, that are pushing for Palestinian



SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Israeli soldiers in Gaza seen during an escorted press tour.

sovereignty after the war ends.

The blueprint for Gaza comes after nearly 20 weeks of war in the territory and a death toll approaching 30,000 people, at least half of them women and children, according to Gazan authorities.

Mr. Netanyahu’s proposal for postwar Gaza was circulated to cabinet ministers and journalists on Friday. He has laid out most of the terms of the proposal in previous public statements, but this was the first time they had been collected in a single document.

The proposal also calls for the dismantling of UNRWA, the U.N. agency charged with delivering the bulk of the life-sustaining aid to the besieged territory. And it calls for an overhaul of the Gazan education and welfare systems, as well as buffer zones along Gaza’s borders with Israel and Egypt.

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After 2 Years of War, Putin Leans
Into His Unpredictable Persona

By ANTON TROIANOVSKI

After President Biden called President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia a “crazy S.O.B.” this week, the Kremlin was quick to issue a stern condemnation.

But the image of an unpredictable strongman ready to escalate his conflict with the West is one that Mr. Putin has fully embraced after two years of full-scale war.

At home, the Kremlin is maintaining the mystery over the circumstances of the death last week of Aleksei A. Navalny, preventing the opposition leader’s family from reclaiming his body.

In Ukraine, Mr. Putin is pressing his army to maintain its brutal offensive, boasting on television that he stayed up all night as the city of Avdiivka fell to Russian forces.

And in outer space, American officials warn, Russia may be

planning to place a nuclear weapon into orbit, aboard a satellite, which would violate one of the last arm control treaties.

In power since 1999, Mr. Putin, 71, is set to extend his rule to 2030 in Russia’s rubber-stamp elections next month. As the vote nears, he is feeding his increasingly overt conception of himself as a history-making leader carrying on the legacy of past rulers who were willing to sacrifice untold numbers of lives to build a stronger Russian state.

But Mr. Putin also faces headwinds: a still-determined Ukrainian resistance, a Western alliance that largely remains united and murmurs of discontent in the Russian public. The question is whether Mr. Putin, as he exults in leading a “thousand-year, eternal

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Sept. 11 Case Bogs Down in Hazy Memories and Lost Witnesses

By CAROL ROSENBERG

GUANTÁNAMO BAY, Cuba — Four years ago, in dramatic testimony, a U.S. psychologist described in open court how he had threatened to slit the throat of a young son of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the accused mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks, if another Qaeda attack claimed the life of an American child.

On Wednesday, the psychologist, Dr. James E. Mitchell, told a

stunned courtroom that episode had not happened. “I didn’t say anything about killing his son,” said Dr. Mitchell, a retired Air Force psychologist who in 2003 waterboarded Mr. Mohammed 183 times for the C.I.A. “He didn’t have sons until later.”

Dr. Mitchell later acknowledged he had forgotten his threat. But the episode underscores a new challenge for the military court in the case against four prisoners who are accused of conspiring

Deaths Take a Toll on a
Military Court’s Task

ing in the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001: the fading memories and unavailability of witnesses whose testimony is central to getting the death-penalty case to trial.

Testimony and other evidence often deteriorate over time, which

is one reason that criminal defendants and their victims are entitled to a speedy trial.

This month, two retired military officers were too ill to travel to Washington to testify about the defendants’ health and prison conditions at Guantánamo in early 2007. It was a critical period in the case, when prosecutors say the defendants voluntarily confessed to their crimes. Defense lawyers argue the confessions

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NATIONAL A10-16

States Weigh Caps on Rent

Washington wants to limit increases to 7 percent. Oregon and California have passed similar measures. PAGE A10

A Failed Accusation

The G.O.P. built its impeachment case against President Biden around an uncorroborated bribery report. PAGE A15

INTERNATIONAL A4-9

Protecting Africa’s Donkeys

Governments are seeking to curb exports of skin to China, where a demand for traditional medicine threatens animals needed at home. PAGE A5

Conflict Over Navalny’s Body

The activist’s mother was given an ultimatum to agree to a secret funeral or accept a burial at the prison. PAGE A8

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Set a Course for Adventure

On board for the inaugural sailing of Royal Caribbean’s Icon of the Seas, the world’s largest cruise ship. PAGE C7



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The Bargains Next Door

Hong Kong residents are finding lower prices, better service and tasty cuisine in nearby Shenzhen, China. PAGE B1

A Twist on Home Cooking

Developers are transforming clusters of old houses into restaurants to cater to the needs of neighborhoods. PAGE B1

SPORTS B7-10

Why the Pirates Keep Losing

More than one thing is keeping Pittsburgh from winning, like years of misses in the draft, but a frugal owner who’s comfortable “being mediocre” does not help. PAGE B7

M.L.S. Preseason at Coachella

AEG, an entertainment giant, is organizing training camps marketed to fans, as other sports have done. The games offer up-close looks at teams in a casual, and cheaper, setting. PAGE B9

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Michelle Goldberg

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Waiting to Sing His Song

Did Jelly Roll Morton “invent” jazz, as he claimed? A revival of “Jelly’s Last Jam” offers a thrilling rejoinder. Jesse Green has the review. PAGE C1

