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NEWS ANALYSIS

Trump Sees U.S. as Boss Of Americas

Tighter Regional Grip via Force or Favor

By JACK NICAS

President Trump opened the year with pledges to seize the Panama Canal, take control of Greenland and rename the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

He is ending it by bombing boats from South America, stationing the world’s largest aircraft carrier in the Caribbean and exploring military options against Venezuela’s autocratic leader.

In a sharp shift of decades of U.S. foreign policy, the Western Hemisphere has become the United States’ central theater abroad. In addition to military threats and action, the White House this year has carried out punishing tariffs, severe sanctions, pressure campaigns and economic bailouts across the Americas.

Mr. Trump has said he is seeking to stop drugs and migrants from entering the United States. But, in other moments, top administration officials have been explicit that their overarching goal is to assert American dominance over its half of the planet.

“He believes this is the neighborhood we live in,” said Mauricio Claver-Carone, Mr. Trump’s special envoy to Latin America until June, who continues to advise the White House. “And you can’t be the pre-eminent global power if you’re not the pre-eminent regional power.”

The United States has long tried to tip the scales around Latin America, where it has supported military coups, conducted covert operations and invaded Panama.

That U.S. foreign policy was often tied to ideology. During the Cold War, there was the effort to champion capitalism — even if it meant backing dictators. In recent decades, as attention drifted to wars and competition in the other hemisphere, the focus was on democracy and free trade in Latin America.

Mr. Trump’s approach appears purely pragmatic: What is in it for the United States?

Stronger control of the hemisphere, and particularly Latin America, promises major benefits. Ample natural resources, strategic security positions and

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TIERNY L. CROSS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Trump’s approach in Latin America appears pragmatic: What’s in it for the United States?

U.N. Security Council Adopts Gaza Peace Plan

By FARNAZ FASSIHI

The United Nations Security Council on Monday approved President Trump’s peace plan for Gaza, a breakthrough that provides a legal U.N. mandate for the administration’s vision of how to move past the cease-fire and rebuild the war-ravaged Gaza Strip after two years of strife.

The Council’s vote was also a major diplomatic victory for the Trump administration. For two years, as the conflict between Israel and Hamas has raged, the United States had been isolated at the United Nations over its

Diplomatic Victory for Trump Gives Process a Legal Mandate

staunch support for Israel.

The U.S. resolution calls for an International Stabilization Force to enter, demilitarize and govern Gaza. The proposal, which contains Mr. Trump’s 20-point cease-fire plan, also envisions a Board of Peace to oversee the effort, though it does not clarify the composition of the board.

The resolution passed with 13 votes in favor and zero votes against. Russia and China, either of which could have vetoed it, abstained, apparently swayed by the support for the resolution from a number of Arab and Muslim nations: Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Indonesia, Turkey and Pakistan, which is a member of the Council.

Mike Waltz, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, who addressed the Council before the vote, called Gaza “hell on earth” and held up a copy of the resolution.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

A Dept. of Distraction Aids Trump on Epstein

Bondi Rushes to Investigate Democrats

By GLENN THRUSH

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Pam Bondi’s prosecutorial sprint speed is improving, at least from the perspective of the man holding a stopwatch, President Trump.

Just 217 minutes elapsed between Mr. Trump’s command on Friday morning that she investigate prominent Democrats like Bill Clinton who were named in documents Congress obtained from Jeffrey Epstein’s estate and Ms. Bondi’s announcement that she had referred the matter to the U.S. attorney in Manhattan. Earlier demands took days, sometimes weeks, to fulfill.

Ms. Bondi’s statement was a demonstration of Mr. Trump’s near-total success in subordinating the Justice Department’s post-Watergate independence to his will. Friday was a milestone of sorts. The department was deployed, in effect, as an arm of the president’s rapid-response operation to help him muscle through a damaging news cycle, current and former officials said.

“Whether you are investigated or prosecuted, or whether you are pardoned or have your sentence commuted, depends on whether you are an enemy or a friend of Donald Trump,” said Mary McCord, who once oversaw the department’s national security division and is now a professor at Georgetown Law.

“There is no pretense of even-handed justice,” she said. “That

core principle is gone.” Several Trump allies, requesting anonymity to speak candidly, conceded that the investigation was an effort to shift attention from messages that suggested he knew far more about Mr. Epstein’s abuse of underage girls than he previously acknowledged. Just as important, they said, was Mr. Trump’s need to deflect an emerging challenge within his party: the push to release the remaining Justice Department and F.B.I. investigative files on Mr. Epstein.

On Sunday night, Mr. Trump effectively acknowledged his inability to block the Epstein files as a political narrative. [Page A15.] Facing all-but-certain defeat on Capitol Hill, he reversed himself and urged the

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KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Attorney General Pam Bondi’s actions reflect an about-face.

Judge Says Comey Prosecutor May Have Made Critical Errors

By ALAN FEUER

A federal magistrate judge said on Monday that the criminal case against James B. Comey, the former F.B.I. director, could be in trouble because of a series of apparent errors committed in front of the grand jury by Lindsey Halligan, the inexperienced prosecutor picked by President Trump to oversee the matter.

The remarkable rebuke of Ms. Halligan came in a 24-page ruling in which the magistrate judge, William E. Fitzpatrick, ordered her to give Mr. Comey’s lawyers all of the grand jury materials she used to obtain the indictment and

raised the question of whether “government misconduct” in the case might require dismissing the charges altogether.

In his ruling, Judge Fitzpatrick said that when Ms. Halligan appeared — by herself — in front of the grand jury in September to seek an indictment accusing Mr. Comey of lying to and obstructing Congress in 2020 testimony, she made at least two “fundamental and highly prejudicial” misstatements of the law. He also pointed out that the grand jury materials he ordered her to turn over to him

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As Immigration Recasts Town, Mayor’s ‘Yes’ Keeps the Peace

By VIDUSHI MISHTI SHARMA

Barely two months after President Trump’s inauguration, a simple dispute in Secaucus, N.J., was threatening to turn into a minor crisis.

For almost all of March, a giant Islamic crescent had hung in the town’s main square for the month of Ramadan — a reflection of the growing Muslim population among the town’s 22,000 residents. With Easter approaching, some longtime Italian American residents were bristling at what they saw as preferential treatment.

A Facebook post by Nick Mattiello, 30, a former volunteer firefighter, gained traction in a local town group, crystallizing the frustration. Mr. Mattiello cited “a noticeable absence of displays honoring Christianity” despite representation for other faiths. He called for an Easter display in the spot where the Ramadan crescent had hung.

“We acknowledge other reli-

gions but continuously overlook the foundational one that reveres Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,” he wrote. “It’s disappointing and disheartening to me.”

What might have become an explosive situation was quickly defused when Mayor Michael Gonnelli learned of the complaint. He asked a public works employee to build a cross, which went up after Ramadan ended, right in time for Easter. Crisis averted.

Such conflicts have become more common in Secaucus. When Mr. Gonnelli first became mayor in 2009, the town resembled him: white and Italian American. But in the intervening years, Secaucus, five miles west of Manhattan in New Jersey’s Meadowlands, has experienced a transformation.

White residents are now a minority in a diverse community where Indian, Asian and Latino populations have grown substantially. Though the town has tradi-

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MICKAËL BELLJOT, VIA PARADISE PARK WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

A Flight to Freedom, Against All Odds

Frankie, a Caribbean flamingo, flew 130 miles to France from captivity in England, despite having a clipped wing. Page A10.

Two Days After On-Field Glory, Cowboys Defender Was Dead

By NICHOLAS BOGEL-BURROUGHS

WYOMING, Mich. — A cadre of Dallas Cowboys players chased after the football as it tumbled into the end zone under the bright lights of “Monday Night Football.” In a flash, one player emerged in front of the pack — a 268-pound defensive end who smothered the ball for a touchdown.

To most Cowboys fans, it was 6 points scored on a blocked punt. But to many in western Michigan, it was the culmination of a lifetime of hard work for the funny but quiet, sports- and video-games-obsessed guy they knew, Marshawn Kneeland, who had spent 24 years outrunning circumstances, loss and doubt to make the N.F.L.

That touchdown on Nov. 3 was his first in the league, and the congratulatory texts flooded in, including from one of his college coaches. The next day, Mr. Kneeland was still buzzing from the touchdown, and he told the coach, Lou Esposito, that he planned to come back to Michigan that week. Mr. Kneeland said he had some-



COOPER NEILL/GETTY IMAGES

Marshawn Kneeland died after a chase involving the police.

thing to share. Mr. Esposito asked him what it was. “Good news,” he responded.

Two nights later, Mr. Kneeland was dead, following what the authorities in Texas said was a police chase, a crash and, then, a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

The case raised questions that have yet to be answered, in part

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Top U.N. Official Enters Sudan

Paramilitaries accused of atrocities pledged to allow international aid and investigators into El Fasher. PAGE A7

Afghan-Pakistani Ties Fray

Taliban officials, supportive of the Pakistani Taliban, have angered their ex-allies in Pakistan’s military. PAGE A4



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Death at School for Disabled

John Scott’s family rarely spoke of him after he was sent to an institution 70 years ago. His youngest brother set out to learn what happened to him. PAGE A11

Passport Policy Reversal

The Trump administration has said that the U.S. passports of transgender people must now reflect the sex listed on their original birth certificate. PAGE A14

The N.E.H.’s Cultural Shift

Some supporters of the National Endowment for the Humanities are objecting to mass firings and handpicked projects that tilt to the right. PAGE A12

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Hobbyists to Army Suppliers

Neros, a company founded in 2023 by teenage drone racers, won a coveted military contract and is gaining popularity in the defense sector. PAGE B1

‘No Closure’ for Victims

In South Korea, fewer women report job harassment, but those who do say their claims are often dismissed. PAGE B1

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The N.B.A.’s Forgotten Pioneer

Spencer Haywood once won players the right to join the league sooner. He wants that rule named for him. PAGE B6

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Reviving a Chinese Classic

Huang Ruo and David Henry Hwang’s “The Monkey King” brings an old superhero to the opera stage. PAGE C1

NBA YoungBoy, in Plain Sight

After receiving a presidential pardon, the performer recently completed one of the biggest tours in rap history. PAGE C1



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Taking Stock of a Hazard

Target shooting at indoor gun ranges may be causing brain injuries. Reporters assessed the dangers. PAGE D1

The Mind-Control Games

Teams of researchers and technology “pilots” compete to see whose brain-computer interface is the best. PAGE D1

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Michael Ratney

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