

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

VOL. CLXXV No. 60,773

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 2026

Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



Congressional Republicans repeatedly accused Jack Smith of participating in a Democratic conspiracy to destroy President Trump.

In Testimony, Smith Defends Trump Prosecutions

By GLENN THRUSH
and ALAN FEUER

WASHINGTON — Jack Smith, the special prosecutor who twice indicted Donald J. Trump, defended his investigation in a tense and long-awaited appearance before a House committee on Thursday — flatly accusing Mr. Trump of causing the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

"No one should be above the law in this country, and the law required that he be held to account," Mr. Smith said in his opening remarks. "So that is what I did."

Mr. Smith's restrained testimony amounted to the summation he was never allowed to de-

Law Required That the President 'Be Held to Account,' He Says

liver in a courtroom, and concluded that Mr. Trump "engaged in criminal activity" that undermined democracy and the rule of law.

The hearing posed significant risks to Mr. Smith, who has said he believes Mr. Trump and his appointees will seize on the smallest misstep to investigate, prosecute and humiliate him. House Republicans had made it clear that they

would make a criminal referral to the Justice Department if his testimony revealed serious inconsistencies or misstatements.

As if to underscore that danger, Mr. Trump took to Truth Social to go after Mr. Smith. Hopefully Attorney General Pam Bondi "is looking at what he's done, including some of the crooked and corrupt witnesses that he was attempting to use in his case against me," he wrote.

But the hearing also provided Mr. Smith with what was likely to be his best opportunity to challenge, in an official forum, Mr. Trump's justification for ordering the Justice Department to pursue

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Sharp Words Split Alliance

U.S. Bid for Greenland Has Europe Rethinking

By STEVEN ERLANGER
and JEANNA SMIALEK

BERLIN — The depth of the rift between President Trump and Europe was on full display this week as Mr. Trump delivered remarks in Davos, Switzerland, airing his disdain for Europe's immigration policies, its regulations and its strident unwillingness to give him Greenland, which he insists America must own.

For months, Europe has been looking to find a diplomatic answer to de-escalate the crisis. Hope for such an offramp came late Wednesday, when Mr. Trump posted on Truth Social to announce that he and Mark Rutte, the NATO secretary general, were working on a deal that could resolve the dispute over Greenland, an autonomous territory of Denmark. He suggested that tariffs he had previously threatened to impose on European nations starting Feb. 1 would no longer kick in.

But neither he nor NATO provided any details of what that framework might look like, and there is no guarantee that such a deal will be finished. A member of the Danish Parliament from Greenland called the deal into question in a social media post, saying it had created "total confusion."

The dust had not yet settled, but one thing was clear: Mr. Trump's comments throughout Wednesday underscored just how little the United States and Europe — long the closest of allies — now have in common.

"While we may no longer be literally staring down the barrel of a gun on the trans-Atlantic relationship, we are still in a very rocky place," said Jacob Funk Kirkegaard, a senior fellow at Bruegel, a research institute in Brussels.

"We are fundamentally at

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PROPOSALS Sovereign U.S. bases and mineral rights are part of a potential Greenland deal. PAGE A6

CHAOS With his reversal on tariffs over Greenland, President Trump returned to a familiar role. PAGE B1

Few Say Return of Trump Has Improved Life in U.S.

Poor Marks on Cost of Living, ICE Tactics and Foreign Policy in Poll of Voters

This article is by Shane Goldmacher, Ruth Igelnik and Camille Baker.

Less than a third of voters think the country is better off than it was when President Trump returned to the White House a year ago, with a wide majority saying he has focused on the wrong issues, according to a new poll from The New York Times and Siena University.

A majority of voters disapprove of how Mr. Trump has handled top issues, including the economy, immigration, the war between Russia and Ukraine and his actions in Venezuela. And significantly, a majority of Americans, 51 percent, said that Mr. Trump's policies had made life less affordable for them.

All told, 49 percent of voters said the country was worse off than a year ago, compared with 32 percent who said it was better.

The survey also revealed the extent to which Mr. Trump has polarized the nation into its furthest partisan corners, with more voters seeing him as on track to be historically bad or good rather than merely below or above average. Some 42 percent of voters said he was on track to be one of the worst presidents in American history — and 19 percent said he was headed to be one of the best.

Mr. Trump's own job approval rating stands at 40 percent, down three points since September. His

disapproval rating has crept up to 56 percent.

Only 42 percent of voters rated Mr. Trump's first year as a success.

One glimmer of good news for Mr. Trump is that the share of voters who say the country is on the right track, while low, has remained largely unchanged since at least April. It also remains higher than it was under his predecessor, Joseph R. Biden Jr., who on this question alienated not just Republicans and independents but also half of Democrats. Under Mr. Trump, most Republicans still feel the country is headed in the right direction.

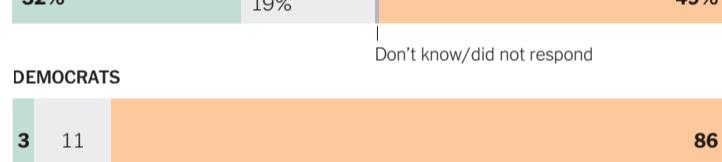
Still, there were some signs of softening support for Mr. Trump among Republicans when it came to his approach to foreign affairs and addressing the cost of living. His lowest approval rating within his party came on his handling of the release of files related to the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein: Only 53 percent of Republicans approved of his handling of that matter.

Overall, only 34 percent of independent voters, who tend to determine who wins elections, approve of the job that Mr. Trump is doing. And twice as many independent voters think the country is worse off now compared with a year ago than better, 52 percent to 24 percent.

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QUESTION Do you think the country is generally better off than it was a year ago, about the same or worse off?

ALL RESPONDENTS



DEMOCRATS



INDEPENDENTS



Based on a New York Times/Siena poll of 1,625 registered voters nationwide conducted Jan. 12 to 17.

MARTÍN GONZÁLEZ GÓMEZ/THE NEW YORK TIMES

More on the White House

CONFLICTS President Trump and his family have engaged in a moneymaking campaign like none in modern U.S. history. PAGE A10

PRESSURE The Supreme Court is also grappling with a key question about the Fed's independence from the White House. PAGE B1

Analysis of Urban Data Shows Steep Decline in Homicide Rate

By SHAILA DEWAN and LAZARO GAMIO

Last year is likely to register the lowest national homicide rate in 125 years and the largest single-year drop on record, according to a new analysis of 2025 crime data.

Violence has been falling for several years. But last year for the first time, all seven categories of violent crime tracked by the analysis fell below pre-pandemic levels.

The numbers provide further evidence that the surge in violence in the early 2020s was a departure during a time of massive social upheaval, not a new normal.

The analysis of data from 40 cities, by the Council on Criminal Justice, a nonpartisan think tank, found across-the-board decreases in crime last year compared with 2019: 25 percent fewer homicides,

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ICE Around Every Corner

Minneapolis residents say they carry a sense of dread, even on the city's empty streets. Page A8.

South Shudders as Snow and Bitter Cold Loom

By RICK ROJAS

ATLANTA — Blankets of snow and sheets of ice. Blustery winds and temperatures plunging to lows that can burst pipes. Across a vast swath of the country on Thursday, officials and meteorologists warned people to be ready for any of it.

The forecasts this week have been ominous, but blurred by uncertainty. Meteorologists expect a barrage of harsh weather in the

Precautions in Georgia, Texas and Carolinas

eastern two-thirds of the country in the next few days, but exactly which areas will face the brunt of it has been a moving target.

Ocie Fulford certainly wasn't going to test his luck. He walked out of a Kroger supermarket in Atlanta on Wednesday evening

pushing a cart stuffed with canned goods, bread and peanut butter — enough, he hoped, to keep his two teenage sons fed during whatever comes.

"I've also got a delivery of more supplies coming to the home later," Mr. Fulford, 51, said, "and I went to the Home Depot to get a five-gallon gas canister I filled up."

He had been through awful winter weather in Atlanta before, no-

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INTERNATIONAL A4-7

China's High-End Ghost Town

Ocean Flower Island, an unfinished luxury project in Hainan, is a \$12 billion homage to debt-fueled excess. PAGE A4

Some Cities See Hottest Year

The overall global average temperature was the third-warmest on record in 2025, part of an 11-year streak. PAGE A7



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Ex-Valdez Officer Not Guilty

Adrian Gonzales, a former school police officer, had faced 29 counts, 19 for the dead and 10 for the survivors, in the 2022 Texas school shooting. PAGE A16

Nurses' Pay Is Key Strike Issue

As a strike by health workers enters a second week, nurses in New York City are seeking \$200,000 a year. PAGE A17

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An Eminent Political Scientist

Stephen Hess, a Brookings Institution scholar and one of Washington's most widely quoted analysts, was 92. PAGE B11

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