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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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In Trump’s new team, loyalty is the top trait

Key picks have a range of ideologies and, in some cases, limited expertise

BY HANNAH KNOWLES, MARIANNE LEVINE AND CAT ZAKRZEWSKI

Donald Trump entered the White House eight years ago with a Cabinet full of traditional conservative credentials, tapping some people he barely knew to help him learn his way around Washington.

Now the president-elect has rapidly assembled a different kind of team for his second term — enlisting people deeply critical of the agencies they will lead, bucking conservative orthodoxy with some of his picks and, above all, rewarding his most loyal allies.

“These are folks he knows well,” said Brian Ballard, a lobbyist and Trump ally. “He’s never going to question what’s the real agenda here. That’s no longer going to be the case.”

Trump’s Cabinet is almost complete just three weeks after his reelection, offering an unusually quick window into his plans and priorities for a second administration. After years of complaining about first-term staff members who resisted his ideas and ultimately denounced him, Trump has prioritized loyalty over traditional expertise in some positions and has elevated some supporters with little direct or managerial experience in the areas they are set to lead.

Rather than reflect a single political ideology, Trump’s selections show how he continues to

SEE CABINET ON A5

Showdown looms over ‘sanctuary city’ funds

Trump allies seek to strip federal resources over immigration enforcement

BY JACOB BOGAGE AND JEFF STEIN

President-elect Donald Trump’s advisers are discussing how to unilaterally strip federal resources from Chicago and other Democratic-run cities if they refuse to participate in deportations of undocumented immigrants next year, according to three people familiar with the conversations.

Advisers to Trump have pushed for using federal pressure — such as withholding federal funds — against municipalities that don’t cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on deportations, the people said. The people spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe efforts not yet made public.

Trump vowed mass deportations during his campaign — eliciting fierce pushback from some Democratic mayors in “sanctuary cities” and governors in blue states, some of whom are already promising to defy the president-elect’s pledges. He tried to slash funds to those jurisdictions in his

SEE CITIES ON A16

Israel, Hezbollah reach cease-fire agreement



ED RAM/GETTY IMAGES

People in Beirut watch as Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu speaks about a cease-fire in his country’s year-long conflict with Hezbollah.

Trump tariff plan unsettles U.S. trading partners

Mexico, Canada respond quickly to possible risk for supply chains, prices

BY DAVID J. LYNCH, NICK MIROFF AND HANNAH KNOWLES

President-elect Donald Trump’s announcement of planned tariffs next year on imports from the United States’ three largest trading partners is almost certainly the opening salvo in a high-stakes negotiation that will rattle businesses and governments on two continents.

Still almost two months from

assuming the powers of the presidency, Trump is effectively threatening to blow up more than \$2.1 trillion in annual two-way trade with Mexico, Canada and China if he does not win quick concessions on immigration and drug traffic. The potential upheaval would put at risk major supply chains, including for automakers and appliance manufacturers, and would be likely to raise prices for consumers.

His ultimatum drew a swift response.

Within hours of Trump’s Monday evening social media posts outlining plans to impose tariffs

SEE TARIFFS ON A4



GUILLERMO ARIAS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Trucks line up to enter the U.S. from Tijuana, Mexico, on Tuesday. Donald Trump has called for 25 percent tariffs on imported goods.

Mexico: Top trading partner vows to retaliate against new levies. A4

The decisions that cost some lives and saved others amid Helene’s wrath

In Tenn. town, 6 plant workers died as 70 people at a hospital were saved

BY SAMUEL OAKFORD, KIM BELLWARE AND SILVIA FOSTER-FRAU

ERWIN, TENN. — The workers at the Impact Plastics factory were frantic.

Muddy water was overflowing from the Nolichucky River in East Tennessee into the road in front of their workplace with such force that it lifted parked SUVs. Within a matter of minutes, a dozen people were trapped.

Johnny Peterson, who had worked at the plant for three decades, clung to a truck with several of his co-workers. He alternated between texting his family, calling 911 and recording the apocalyptic flooding around him.

In the end, six people, including Peterson, were swept away and killed.

The flooding in the small rural town of Erwin on Sept. 27 that stemmed from Hurricane Helene would later be deemed the result of a 5,000-year event. But the deluge wasn’t the only force determining who lived and died that day. A Washington Post investigation based on videos and photos — some recorded by victims in their final moments — as well as interviews with survivors,

SEE HELENE ON A6



SEAN OCHSENBEIN/BALLAD HEALTH

As floodwaters rose on Sept. 27 in Erwin, Tennessee, patients and staff at Unicoi County Hospital waited on the roof to be rescued.

Biden wants Medicare to pay for obesity drugs

Broader coverage would be a hard sell to Kennedy in Trump administration

BY DAN DIAMOND

The Biden administration Tuesday proposed expanding coverage of weight-loss medications for millions of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, a late-term proposal that officials said would boost public health and which puts pressure on the incoming Trump administration to finalize the benefit.

The proposal is “a game changer. It helps us recognize that obesity is with us,” Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said in an interview Monday. “It’s severe. It’s damaging our country’s health. It’s damaging our economy.”

Becerra said the proposal would expand coverage of anti-obesity drugs to 7.5 million people enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid, which his agency projected would add \$25 billion in Medicare costs and \$11 billion in Medicaid costs during the next decade. States would also assume \$4 billion in additional costs as part of their share of the Medicaid pro-

gram, he said.

Becerra said the additional costs represented a modest fraction of the forecasted spending for Medicare, citing estimates that the program is expected to spend more than \$2 trillion on drugs across the next decade.

Medicare does not cover weight-loss medication, although many beneficiaries receive drugs such as Ozempic and Wegovy to treat diabetes and heart disease, conditions that can be exacerbated by obesity.

In a statement, Biden administration officials said they had interpreted their long-standing rules blocking coverage for weight-loss drugs with a new-found recognition that obesity is “a chronic disease based on changes in medical consensus.” The new rules would apply only to people who are obese. Beneficiaries who are overweight would not be eligible unless they have another condition such as diabetes that qualifies for weight-loss drugs.

The Trump administration is not required to finalize any or all of the proposal. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — whom Trump has selected to be the next HHS secretary, if confirmed by the Senate — is an avowed critic of weight-loss drugs such as Ozempic, which he

SEE MEDICARE ON A16

IN THE NEWS

Maternal deaths in Texas A state panel that examines pregnancy-related fatalities will not review cases from 2022 and 2023, the first two years after an abortion ban took effect. A2

D.C. stadiums Council members advanced legislation that would fund renovations at Nationals Park and Capital One Arena. B1

THE NATION
President Joe Biden is racing to bolster Kyiv’s position before potential talks with Moscow. A3
A judge denied a bid to temporarily block Jack Smith from destroying investigative records. A7

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As China’s economy slows and discontent rises, vehicular attacks and stabbings have spurred concerns over social instability and vows of decisive action from Beijing. A8

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Workers who change jobs could lose out on thousands in 401(k) retirement savings. Here’s how to avoid that. A11
Walmart, the world’s largest private employer, is rolling back its diversity initiatives after facing backlash from conservatives. A12

THE REGION
Maryland authorities charged an FBI agent with second-degree rape, two years after he was acquitted in a shooting on a Metro train. B1
A multiagency effort has dismantled four violent criminal organizations operating in Baltimore, officials said. B1

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At the Paris outpost of Dover Street Market, the marketing machinery of fashion is subverted in a way that makes room for imagination and longing. C1

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