



HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Plans for a Tiny New Country
Baba Mondi, a Muslim cleric, hopes for a Vatican-style sovereign enclave in Tirana, Albania, about the size of five city blocks. Page 8.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Israeli Attacks
Abruptly End
A Status Quo

By BEN HUBBARD
ISTANBUL — For the second time in less than two months, Israel located and killed Hezbollah's most senior and secretive military figures as they held covert meetings near Beirut. And in between those strikes, Israel incapacitated hundreds, if not thousands, of the group's rank-and-file members by remotely blowing up their pagers and walkie-talkies.

Hezbollah's response so far: calls for vengeance and routine rocket fire into northern Israel. The assassination of the senior military leader Ibrahim Aqeel and other ranking Hezbollah militants on Friday capped a week that threw Lebanon's most sophisticated political and military force into deep disarray and appeared to represent a stark shift in the calculations that had long governed the decades-old conflict between Israel and Hezbollah.

Since the two forces effectively fought each other to a standstill in a hugely destructive war in 2006, Israel and Hezbollah have been arming up and preparing for the next major confrontation, feeding a situation of mutual deterrence that kept intermittent clashes along the Lebanon-Israel border from spiraling into another big war.

Israelis feared that a new conflict could include Hezbollah's targeting of sensitive infrastructure inside Israel, and well-trained Hezbollah commandos rampaging though Israeli communities. Hezbollah knew that Israel's air force could swiftly cause extensive destruction in Lebanon, especially in the communities from which the group draws its support.

This past week, however, Israel's leaders decided to push past that equation and crossed what had been unofficially considered red lines. So far, it appears to have worked.

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Harris and Trump, and Everybody in Between

This article is by Jonathan Swan, Jennifer Medina, Ruth Igielnik and Maggie Haberman.

Devon Howard is not feeling the joy.

Mr. Howard, a 25-year-old airport technician, has no use for Vice President Kamala Harris's displays of optimism. And he doubts whether either candidate can fix what he sees as a country headed in the wrong direction. Like other voters in Las Vegas, Mr. Howard is fed up with the costs of gas and rent, as his paycheck seems to cover less and less of his regular expenses.

Undecided Voters Are
Tired of Chaos, and
Aren't Sold on Joy

"I just don't like the way they're playing it, telling us we should all be more optimistic when things just are not looking good right now," Mr. Howard said while warming up for a softball game in East Las Vegas. "They're all out for themselves, not helping people like us over here. We just get the same promises, and not much is

changing."

Mr. Howard hasn't decided whom he'll vote for — or whether he'll vote at all. He has grown frustrated by how much former President Donald J. Trump has divided the country — though he voted for Mr. Trump in 2020 — but he has also been unimpressed by Ms. Harris. Mostly, he and his friends try to tune out the daily bombardment of political news.

His sourness about the economy, the direction of the country and his own personal finances reflects the feelings of millions of Americans. They're the so-called

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THE AUGUSTA CHRONICLE/USA TODAY NETWORK

Secret Service agents after a threat to President Ronald Reagan at Augusta National in 1983.

In Trump's White House,
The Pursuit of Retribution

Examination Reveals How the President's
Demands for Inquiries Were Met

By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT

It was the spring of 2018 and President Donald J. Trump, faced with an accelerating inquiry into his campaign's ties to Russia, was furious that the Justice Department was reluctant to strike back at those he saw as his enemies.

In an Oval Office meeting, Mr. Trump told startled aides that if Attorney General Jeff Sessions would not order the department to go after Hillary Clinton and James B. Comey, the former F.B.I. director, Mr. Trump would prosecute them himself.

Recognizing the extraordinary dangers of a president seeking not just to weaponize the criminal justice system for political ends but trying as well to assume personal control over who should be investigated and charged, the White House counsel, Donald F. McGahn II, sought to stall.

"How about I do this?" Mr. McGahn told Mr. Trump, according to an account verified by witnesses. "I'm going to write you a memo explaining to you what the law is and how it works, and I'll give that memo to you and you can decide what you want to do."

The episode marked the start of a more aggressive effort by Mr. Trump to deploy his power against his perceived enemies despite warnings not to do so by top aides. And a look back at the cases of 10 individuals brings a pattern into clearer focus: After Mr. Trump made repeated public or private demands for them to be targeted by the government, they faced federal pressure of one kind or another.

The broad outlines of those episodes have been previously reported. But a closer examination reveals the degree of concern and pushback against Mr. Trump's demands inside the White House.

And it highlights how closely his expressed desires to go after people who had drawn his ire

were sometimes followed by the Justice Department, F.B.I. or other agencies. Even without his direct order, his indirect influence could serve his ends and leave those in his sights facing expensive, time-consuming legal proceedings or other high-stress inquiries.

The story of that period has a powerful resonance today as Mr. Trump, angered in part by the two federal and two state-level indictments of him since leaving office, threatens to carry out a campaign of retribution if he returns to the White House. He has signaled that a second Trump administration would be stocked not with people who served as guardrails during his first term, but with carefully vetted loyalists who would eagerly carry out his wishes.



Donald F. McGahn II

If elected again, he would also return to the White House bolstered by the Supreme Court's ruling in July that former presidents have broad immunity from prosecution for official acts taken while in office.

Interviews, court filings and secret White House documents shed new light on how Mr. Trump's demands for prosecutions in the spring of 2018 ignited a behind-the-scenes push by some of his top aides to contain his impulses, protect the rule of law and insulate the White House from legal and political blowback — issues that some of them say are arguably even more acute today.

The memo that Mr. McGahn's lawyers in the White House Counsel's Office produced following Mr.

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18-Hole Refuge for Presidents
Is Albatross for Secret Service

By ALAN BLINDER

Ronald Reagan had gone to Augusta National Golf Club in 1983 for a break: He would stay in a cottage formerly favored by Dwight D. Eisenhower and play the course renowned as the home of the Masters Tournament.

Then a man rammed a pickup truck through a gate and headed toward the pro shop, where he took hostages and demanded to talk to Reagan.

The episode concluded after about two hours, with the president and the hostages unhurt. But Reagan decided that his time as the nation's golfer in chief was largely done.

"Playing golf is not worth the chance that someone could get killed," he said, according to Joseph Petro, a longtime member of

Reagan's protective detail who recounted the incident in his 2005 book, "Standing Next to History: An Agent's Life Inside the Secret Service." Reagan rarely played again.

Most recent American presidents have embraced golf as a bipartisan tradition — a head-clearing, backslapping escape where a president is just as likely as anyone else to be betrayed by a putter. But just as the Reagan episode prompted the White House to rethink whether presidential golf rounds invited unnecessary risks, last week's apparently thwarted assassination attempt on former President Donald J. Trump has sparked questions about the perils that come with navigating 18

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After We Exhaust the Earth's Limits, Bioreactor Beef Might Be Next on the Menu

By SOMINI SENGUPTA

More than almost anything else we put into our mouths, meat matters. What flesh we eat — or for-sake — tells the world who we are, what class and caste we belong to, what gods we believe in. Halal or kosher. Pure-veg or paleo. Hormel

or farmers' market.

Worldwide, 80 billion animals are slaughtered every year for meat. Raising all those animals has already claimed most of the world's farmland. It has led to zoonotic diseases and vast deforestation. It has polluted air and water and spewed planet-heating

gasses into the atmosphere.

It has also enabled many more people to eat meat more often than ever before, which has in turn put pressure on governments to both keep meat prices affordable and reduce its climate footprint.

What will all of this mean for the

\$1 trillion global meat industry?

A new kind of factory farming is on the horizon, one that grows meat in giant steel vats, either from real-live cells taken from real-live animals or from tiny microorganisms.

This new industry has many names — lab meat, cellular meat,

cultivated meat, precision fermentation. I think of it as chicken without wings.

Its fans praise its extreme efficiency: feet, tails, feathers, snouts are eliminated. Its detractors say it's a threat to culture and livelihoods. To some people, it's just un-

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| Armor in the Classroom There is a growing market for bullet-proof school supplies like binders and backpacks, which some see as prudent and others as simply infuriating. PAGE 20 | Surgical Choice for Women With breast reduction becoming more common, are women asserting their independence or capitulating to another impossible standard of beauty? PAGE 10 | Sinking of a Restaurant Chain Red Lobster, which introduced millions of Americans to seafood, filed for bankruptcy this year. All-you-can-eat shrimp was one reason why. PAGE 6 | A 'Living Tradition' Thrives Indigo, which has a rich and tangled history, is undergoing a revival by a diverse group of artists, designers and farmers. PAGE 12 | Julia Belluz PAGE 6 |

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