



Israel dismisses hostage proposal

Counteroffer from Hamas has ‘non-starters,’ but Blinken sees hope in talks

This article is by John Hudson, Claire Parker, Karen DeYoung, Susannah George and Lior Soroka

TEL AVIV — Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that Hamas’s response to a proposed deal to release hostages in exchange for a humanitarian pause created space to “pursue negotiations” despite certain aspects that included “non-starters.”

Blinken did not specify what aspects of Hamas’s conditions he considered unacceptable, but his assessment in a news conference here contrasted sharply with remarks earlier Wednesday from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who called Hamas “delusional” and vowed to continue fighting until a “complete victory” was achieved.

It was unclear whether Netanyahu was referring to the Hamas response to a broad hostage release framework negotiated by the United States, Qatar and Egypt last month in Paris, and delivered to Qatar on Tuesday, or to the framework itself. “By giving in to Hamas demands, we will only invite another massacre,” Netanyahu said, adding that Israel would continue its military campaign in southern Gaza.

“There are clearly things that Hamas sent back that are absolute

SEE NETANYAHU ON A8

Justices face history in Trump ballot case

Stakes are high for the U.S. and the court as it hears arguments today

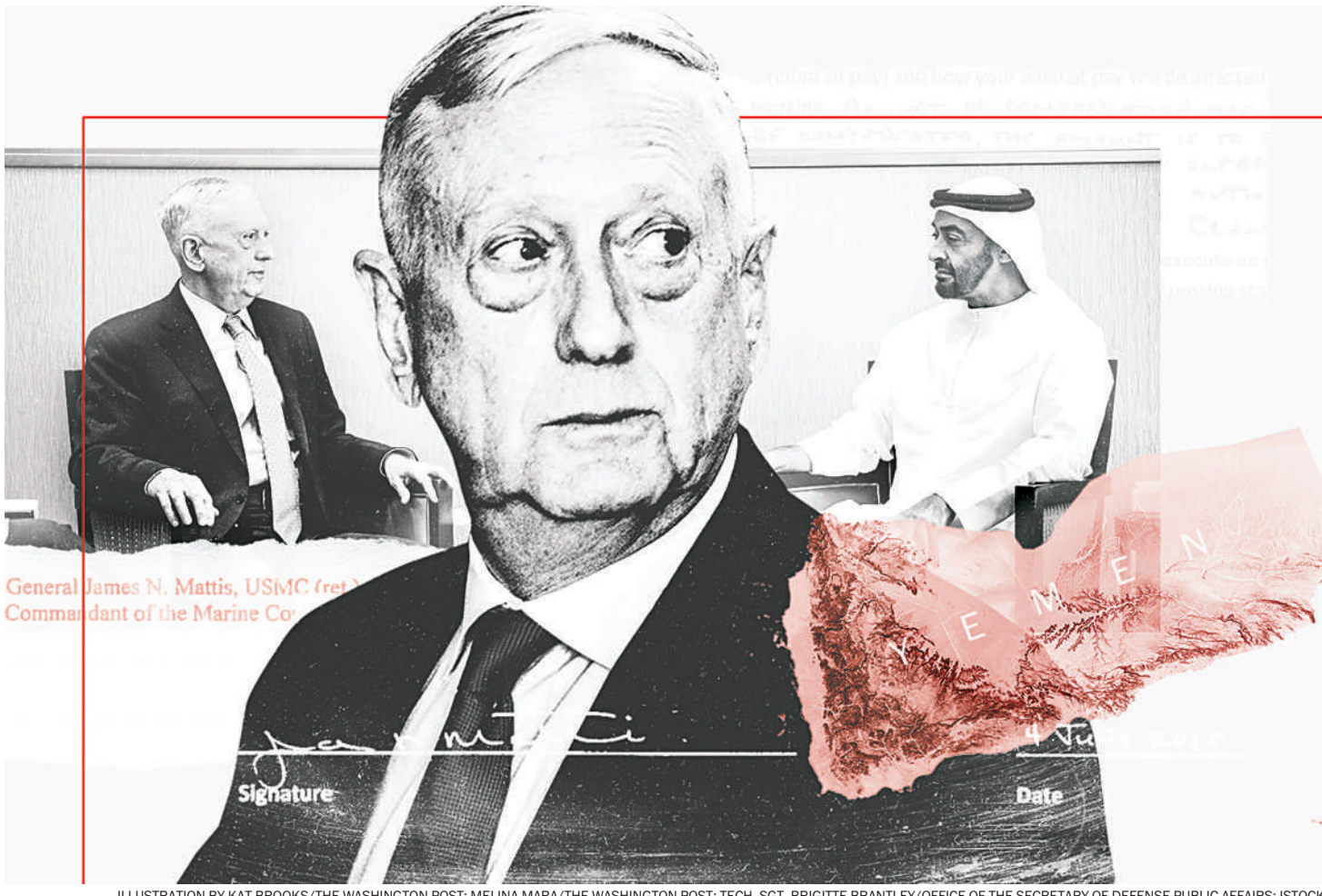
BY ANN E. MARIMOW

The Supreme Court on Thursday will confront the critical question of Donald Trump’s eligibility to return to the White House, hearing arguments in an unprecedented case that gives the justices a central role in charting the course of a presidential election for the first time in nearly a quarter-century.

The justices will decide whether Colorado’s top court was correct to apply a post-Civil War provision of the Constitution to order Trump off the ballot after concluding his actions around the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol amounted to insurrection. Primary voting is already underway in some states. Colorado’s ballots for the March 5 primary were printed last week and include Trump’s name. But his status as a candidate will depend on what the Supreme Court decides.

Unlike *Bush v. Gore* in 2000, when the court’s decision handed the election to George W. Bush, the case challenging Trump’s qualifications for a second term comes at a time when a large swath of the country views the

SEE COURT ON A6



Mattis secretly advised monarch on Yemen war, records show

Soon after his country began bombing Yemen in 2015, the de facto ruler of the United Arab Emirates confidentially reached out to an old friend: retired Marine Gen. Jim Mattis.

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, who also served as the deputy supreme commander of the Emirati military, needed help. The UAE was part of a coalition of Arab countries that had intervened in Yemen’s civil war to fight Iran-backed Houthi rebels. But the coalition’s bombing campaign

U.S. officials approved the retired Marine general’s work for the UAE, then fought to conceal it from the public

BY CRAIG WHITLOCK AND NATE JONES

was killing large numbers of civilians and doing little to deter the Houthis.

With the conflict threatening to turn into a regional quagmire, Mohamed asked Mattis, who retired from the Marines in 2013 after years of fighting wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan, to work for him as a military adviser.

In keeping with federal law, Mattis applied in June 2015 for permission from the Marines and the State Department to advise Mohamed and the UAE

SEE MATTIS ON A10

Republican leaders struggle with unrest amid bungled votes

BY JACQUELINE ALEMANY, MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR, LEIGH ANN CALDWELL AND LIZ GOODWIN

Moments before pandemonium broke out on the House floor on Tuesday evening, House Majority Whip Tom Emmer approached Rep. Ken Buck (R-Colo.), who had assumed a leisurely slouch in a rickety wooden chair in the back

House and Senate GOP are in disarray, leading to lack of productivity

of the House chamber, for what appeared to be a quick chat. Unbeknownst to reporters whose eyes were trained on Em-

mer — the member of House leadership responsible for counting votes — he informed Buck that the vote to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas was going to result in a tie.

Buck, one of the three House Republicans who voted to sink the articles of impeachment, said Wednesday that he hadn’t heard from anyone in leadership before that moment — despite publicly

declaring his opposition to the measure well ahead of the vote. (A senior leadership aide familiar with his outreach efforts, who like others in this story spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly, said House Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana spent ample time working with others who had been on the fence.)

“Speaker Johnson never called me,” Buck said. “[Former speaker

Kevin McCarthy] would have yelled — Mike knows me well enough not to yell. And [former speaker John A.] Boehner would have broken my arm. It’s gotten easier as I’ve been here.”

The surprise defeat stunned many in the House GOP conference

SEE REPUBLICANS ON A4

The wrath of Trump: Republicans worry they’ll become targets. **A3**

They wanted to start a family in Italy. Soon, they could be outlaws.

BY ANTHONY FAIOLA AND STEFANO PITRELLI
IN ERCOLANO, ITALY



GIOVANNI CIPRIANO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Luca Capuano and Salvatore Scarpa with daughter Paola, who was delivered by a surrogate in the United States. They want a second child, but Italian law may soon block that, forcing them to move.

“Mamma mia!” exclaimed Luca Capuano, feigning surprise as his round infant, Paola, slurped another spoonful of her favorite mush, a concoction of rabbit and fennel home-cooked by her other dad, Salvatore Scarpa.

Soon, they hoped, they’d be cooking for more in this kitchen, where Mount Vesuvius looms outside a rear window. The same California-based surrogate who gave birth to Paola last year had agreed to another embryo transplant. The new pregnancy would complete their dream of a family of four.

It could also make them outlaws.

“They don’t consider us a family,” said Capuano, 47, referring to the government of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. “They consider us criminals.”

Italy bars same-sex couples from adopting children in most circumstances or accessing ferti-

ty treatments. Like many countries in Europe, it also bans the practice of surrogacy within its national borders. That stance has prompted couples like Capuano and Scarpa, 30, to arrange to have children using surrogates abroad — often in the United States, with its comparatively liberal policies.

But now, under Italy’s most right-wing leadership since World War II, the government is targeting international surrogacy, as part of what LGBTQ+ activists decry as a war on same-sex parenthood.

A Meloni government edict last year forbade local mayors to register birth certificates that list parents of the same sex. That means 7-month-old Paola — so cherished that her umbilical cord, dipped in gold, is framed on a wall in her family’s apartment — technically remains a legal orphan, with no recognized parents or citizen rights in Italy.

SEE SURROGACY ON A9

IN THE NEWS

Deadly strike in Baghdad The U.S. killed a key militia commander suspected of plotting attacks on American troops in the region. **A14**

Juror bias The D.C. Circuit Court is hearing an appeal from a convicted Jan. 6 defendant who claims he didn’t receive a fair trial due to media coverage of the riot. **B1**

THE NATION **Nikki Haley** sought to move past an embarrassing showing in Nevada’s GOP primary. **A2**
The Environmental Protection Agency tightened soot standards to improve air quality. **A6**

THE WORLD **Turkey** is still struggling to rebuild after a devastating earthquake a year ago. **A7**
A Russian official punctured Tucker Carlson’s rationale for interviewing Putin. **A8**

THE ECONOMY **A new IRS study** suggests that extra investment in the agency would allow it to collect more taxes from rich tax evaders. **A13**
Last year’s spending caps will slow the U.S. debt’s growth by \$1.4 trillion, a report found. **A14**

THE REGION **Virginia** lawmakers are seeking to end tax-exempt status for a Confederate heritage group. **B1**
In his State of the State address, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore (D) sought help near and far to achieve a raft of policy goals. **B1**

SPORTS **The Capitals** face a dilemma with Alex Ovechkin’s chase for a hal- lowed record clashing with an aging roster, Barry Svrluga writes. **D1**

LOCAL LIVING **It’s time to embrace** the laundry chair, a vital part of many people’s homes — and routines.

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