

## Russians Spun American Rage Into a Weapon

### Borrowed U.S. Content Fueled 2016 Strategy

By NICHOLAS CONFESSORE and DAISUKE WAKABAYASHI

YouTube videos of police beatings on American streets. A widely circulated internet hoax about Muslim men in Michigan collecting welfare for multiple wives. A local news story about two veterans brutally mugged on a freezing winter night.

All of these were recorded, posted or written by Americans. Yet all ended up becoming grist for a network of Facebook pages linked to a shadowy Russian company that has carried out propaganda campaigns for the Kremlin, and which is now believed to be at the center of a far-reaching Russian program to influence the 2016 presidential election.

A New York Times examination of hundreds of those posts shows that one of the most powerful weapons that Russian agents used to reshape American politics was the anger, passion and misinformation that real Americans were broadcasting across social media platforms.

The Russian pages — with names like "Being Patriotic," "Secured Borders" and "Blacktivist" — cribbed complaints about federal agents from one conservative website, and a gauzy article about a veteran who became an entrepreneur from People magazine. They took descriptions and videos of police beatings from genuine YouTube and Facebook accounts and reposted them, sometimes lightly edited for maximum effect.

Other posts on the Russian pages used stilted language or phrases rarely found in American English. Yet their use of borrowed ideas and arguments from Americans, which were already resonant.

Continued on Page A13

## Yielding Power, Women Lecture Men of Liberia

By HELENE COOPER

MONROVIA, Liberia — On the eve of a presidential election that will almost certainly return male rule to Liberia after 12 years, women delivered a warning.

By the hundreds they came on Monday, streaming through the mud and gathering on a grassy field in the Airfield Junction neighborhood, across the street from the residence of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first democratically elected female president in Africa, the most patriarchal of places. They wore white T-shirts and danced in front of a big sign.

"Don't Touch Our Peace," it said.

In a rare move on a continent where strongmen leaders cling to power for decades, Mrs. Sirleaf is stepping down at the end of her constitutionally mandated term and the women are giving the country back to the men. Only one woman is at the top of a ticket in Tuesday's election, and she is not expected to win.

But across Monrovia, there is a palpable unease about whether the new president can build on one certain accomplishment of Mrs. Sirleaf: keeping the country out of war.

"We're giving the country back to them, and we don't know what they're going to do with it," said Ansa Garnett, a women's activist who joined other women rallying for peace on Monday. The message on her shirt added emphasis: "Remember our past."

There is no question that Mrs. Sirleaf is running on reserves when it comes to her political capital.

Continued on Page A10

INTERNATIONAL A4-10  
**Putting Faith in a Sibling**  
The North Korean leader's promotion of his sister Kim Yo-jong was a rare vote of support for a family member. PAGE A8

BUSINESS DAY B1-10

'Nudge' Author Wins Nobel  
The economics award went to Richard H. Thaler, a behavioral expert. PAGE B1

SCIENCE TIMES D1-8

Taking On Cancer in Africa  
Working with charities, manufacturers have agreed to slash prices of chemotherapy drugs on the continent. PAGE D1



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### Finding Your Family in Mosul's Rubble

Nadhira Aziz sat in the dust kicked up by an excavator digging near her destroyed home for the bodies of her relatives. Page A6.

## On Trump's Right Flank, a Survivor Well Attuned to Resentment

By MATT FLEGRENHEIMER

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Stephen Miller had their attention. That was reason enough to keep going.

Standing behind the microphone before a hostile amphitheater crowd, Mr. Miller — then a 16-year-old candidate for a student government post, now a 32-year-old senior policy adviser to President Trump — steered quickly into an unlikely campaign plank: ensuring that the janitorial staff was really earning its money.

"Am I the only one," he asked, "who is sick and tired of being told

to pick up my trash when we have plenty of janitors who are paid to do it for us?"

It appeared he was. Boos consumed the grounds of the left-leaning Santa Monica High School campus. Mr. Miller was forcibly escorted from the lectern, shouting inaudibly as he was tugged away.

But offstage, any anger seemed to fade instantly. Students were uncertain whether Mr. Miller had even meant the remarks sincerely. Those who encountered him afterward recalled a tranquility, and a smile. If he had just lost the election — and he had, the math soon confirmed — he did not

seem to feel like it.

"He just seemed really happy," said Charles Gould, a classmate and friend at the time, "as if that's how he planned it."

In the years since, Mr. Miller has rocketed to the upper reaches of White House influence along a distinctly Trumpian arc — powered by a hyper-fluency in the politics of grievance, a gift for nationalist button-pushing after years on the Repub-



Stephen Miller

lican fringe and a long history of being underestimated by liberal forces who dismissed him as a sideshow since his youth.

Across his sun-kissed former home, the so-called People's Republic of Santa Monica, they have come to regret this initial assessment. To the consternation of many former classmates and a bipartisan coalition of Washington lawmakers, Mr. Miller has become one of the nation's most powerful shapers of domestic and even foreign policy.

"The 31-year-old?" Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, muttered to reporters earli-

Continued on Page A18

## E.P.A. ANNOUNCES BID TO ROLL BACK EMISSIONS POLICY

### 'WAR ON COAL IS OVER'

Setting Up a Fight Over America's Efforts on Climate Change

By LISA FRIEDMAN and BRAD PLUMER

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration announced on Monday that it would take formal steps to repeal President Barack Obama's signature policy to curb greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, setting up a bitter fight over the future of America's efforts to tackle global warming.

At an event in eastern Kentucky, Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, said that his predecessors had departed from regulatory norms in crafting the Clean Power Plan, which was finalized in 2015 and would have pushed states to move away from coal in favor of sources of electricity that produce fewer carbon emissions.

"The war on coal is over," Mr. Pruitt said. "Tomorrow in Washington, D.C., I will be signing a proposed rule to roll back the Clean Power Plan. No better place to make that announcement than Hazard, Ky."

The repeal proposal, which will be filed in the Federal Register on Tuesday, fulfills a promise President Trump made to eradicate his predecessor's environmental legacy. Eliminating the Clean Power Plan makes it less likely that the United States can fulfill its promise as part of the Paris climate agreement to ratchet down emissions that are warming the planet and contributing to heat waves.

Continued on Page A17



JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A house on fire in Glen Ellen, Calif., on Monday. Firefighters were battling at least 15 separate fires in eight counties, officials said.

## Wildfires Sweep Through Northern California, Killing at Least 10

This article is by Thomas Fuller, Daniel Victor and Maggie Astor.

SANTA ROSA, Calif. — Fast-moving wildfires raged across Northern California on Monday, killing at least 10 people, sending well over 100 to hospitals, forcing up to 20,000 to evacuate and destroying more than 1,500 buildings in one of the most destructive fire emergencies in the state's history.

Firefighters were battling blazes in eight counties, officials said.

In Santa Rosa, the fire gutted a Hilton hotel and flattened the Journey's End retirement community, a trailer park not far from the freeway that crosses the city. Most of the trailers were leveled, leaving a smoldering debris field of household appliances, filing cabinets and the charred personal effects of more than 100 residents.

Pieces of ash fell like snowflakes, and a pall of white smoke across the city blotted out the sun.

Janet Upton, a deputy director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, said that at least 15 separate fires across the region had destroyed more than 1,500 homes and businesses and burned about 94,000 acres since late Sunday night. At least 10 people had been killed as of Monday evening, she said: sev-

en in Sonoma County, two in Napa County and one in Mendocino County.

The property damage, already among the worst seen in a fire in California, was expected to increase. In Santa Rosa, the seat of Sonoma County, the authorities imposed a curfew starting at sunset and said they were watching for looters.

Gov. Jerry Brown issued emer-

Continued on Page A14

## China Hastens A Global Move To Electric Cars

By KEITH BRADSHIER

SHENZHEN, China — There is a powerful reason that automakers worldwide are speeding up their efforts to develop electric vehicles — and that reason is China.

Propelled by vast amounts of government money and visions of dominating next-generation technologies, China has become the world's biggest supporter of electric cars. That is forcing automakers from Detroit to Yokohama and Seoul to Stuttgart to pick up the pace of transformation or risk being left behind in the world's largest car market.

Beijing has already called for one out of every five cars sold in China to run on alternative fuel by 2025. Last month, China issued new rules that would require the world's carmakers to sell more alternative-energy cars here if they wanted to continue selling regular ones. A Chinese official recently said the country would eventually do away with the internal combustion engine in new cars.

"We are seeing ourselves at a crossroads in the development of the automobile industry in this country, with a global scale in mind," said Jürgen Stackmann, Volkswagen's top executive for VR brand sales and marketing, during a visit to Shanghai.

China has reshaped industries before — clothing, steel making, even lace — through a potent mix of government support and cheap labor. More recently it has transformed green-energy businesses like solar and wind power.

This, however, would be on a different scale.

Continued on Page A8

NATIONAL A12-20  
**A Doctor's Abandoned Journey**  
A trip to a distant mountain town is thwarted by a washed-out road, demonstrating the challenge of reaching patients in rural Puerto Rico. PAGE A22

INTERNATIONAL A4-10  
**Deciding Fate of Crime Scenes**  
Reopen or demolish? Conflicting emotions weigh on decisions over what to do with sites of mass shootings. PAGE A15

BUSINESS DAY B1-10  
**'Nudge' Author Wins Nobel**  
The economics award went to Richard H. Thaler, a behavioral expert. PAGE B1

SCIENCE TIMES D1-8  
**Taking On Cancer in Africa**  
Working with charities, manufacturers have agreed to slash prices of chemotherapy drugs on the continent. PAGE D1

NEW YORK A21-23  
**Fighting for Their Children**

Disabled parents sue, claiming bias from child welfare agencies. PAGE A22

OBITUARIES A24-25

**Y. A. Tittle, Giants Quarterback**

Tittle, who played in three straight N.F.L. championship games after the 49ers discarded him, was 90. PAGE A24

SCIENCE TIMES D1-8

**Taking On Cancer in Africa**

Working with charities, manufacturers have agreed to slash prices of chemotherapy drugs on the continent. PAGE D1

SPORTSTUESDAY B11-15  
**Yanks Force a Decisive Game 5**

The Cleveland Indians made four errors to help the Yankees to a 7-3 win in their American League division series. The winner of Game 5 will face the Houston Astros next. PAGE B11

ARTS C1-7  
**Historians in Blue**

Photos and film shot by New York police officers in the 1960s and 1970s document a turbulent era and offer insight into contentious methods of policing. PAGE C1

EDITORIAL, OP-ED A26-27

**Gretchen Carlson**

PAGE A27



ARTS C1-7  
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