

SPREADING UNREST LEAVES A NATION ON EDGE



VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Protests in Minneapolis continued with new ferocity on Friday night, as the governor said the authorities had been overwhelmed.

A Look Inside
Twitter’s Move
To Flag Trump

By KATE CONGER
OAKLAND, Calif. — Jack Dorsey was up late Thursday at his home in San Francisco talking online with his executives when their conversation was interrupted: President Trump had just posted another inflammatory message on Twitter. Tensions between Twitter, where Mr. Dorsey is chief executive, and Mr. Trump had been running high for days over the president’s aggressive tweets and the company’s decision to begin labeling some of them. In his latest message, Mr. Trump weighed in on the clashes between the police and protesters in Minneapolis, saying, “when the looting starts, the shooting starts.” A group of more than 10 Twitter officials, including lawyers and policymakers, quickly gathered virtually to review Mr. Trump’s post and debate over the messaging system Slack and Google Docs whether it pushed people toward violence. They soon came to a conclusion. And after midnight, Mr. Dorsey gave his go-ahead: Twitter would hide Mr. Trump’s tweet behind a warning label that said the message violated its policy against glorifying violence. It was the first time Twitter applied that specific warning to any public figure’s tweets. The action has prompted a broad fight over whether and how social media companies should be held responsible for what appears on their sites, and was the culmination of months of debate inside Twitter. For more than a year, the company had been building an infrastructure to limit the impact of objectionable messages from world leaders, creating rules on what would and would not be allowed and designing a plan for when Mr. Trump inevitably broke them. But the path to that point was not smooth. Inside Twitter, dealing with Mr. Trump’s tweets — which are the equivalent of a president’s tweets —

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Heaps of Complaints, but Police Resist Change

By SHAILA DEWAN and SERGE F. KOVALESKI
In nearly two decades with the Minneapolis Police Department, Derek Chauvin faced at least 17 misconduct complaints, none of which derailed his career. Over the years, civilian review boards came and went, and a federal review recommended that the troubled department improve its system for flagging problematic officers. All the while, Mr. Chauvin tussled with a man before firing two shots, critically wounding him. He was admonished for using derogatory language and a demeaning tone with the public. He was named in a brutality lawsuit. But he received no discipline other than two letters of reprimand. It was not until Mr. Chauvin, 44, was seen in a video with his left knee pinned to the neck of a black man, prone for nearly nine minutes and pleading for relief, that the officer, who is white, was suspended, fired and then, on Friday, charged with murder. His case is not unusual. Critics say the department, despite its long history of accusations of abuse, never fully put in place federal recommendations to overhaul the way in which it tracks complaints and punishes officers — with just a handful over the years facing termination or severe punishment. Even as outrage has mounted over deaths at the hands of the police, it remains notoriously difficult in the United States to hold officers accountable, in part because of the political clout of police unions, the reluctance of investigators, prosecutors and juries to second-guess an officer’s split-second decision and the wide latitude the law gives police officers to use force. Police departments themselves have often resisted civilian review or dragged their feet when it comes to overhauling officer disciplinary practices. And even change-oriented police chiefs in cities like Baltimore and Philadelphia — which over the last few years have been the sites of high-profile deaths of black men by white officers — have struggled to

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‘Godspeed’: SpaceX Lifts NASA Crew Into Orbit

By KENNETH CHANG
KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla. — The United States opened a new era of human space travel on Saturday as a private company for the first time launched astronauts into orbit, nearly a decade after the government retired the storied space shuttle program in the aftermath of national tragedy. Two American astronauts lifted off at 3:22 p.m. from a familiar setting, the same Florida launchpad that once served Apollo missions and the space shuttles. But the rocket and capsule that lofted them out of the atmosphere were a new sight for many — built and operated not by NASA but SpaceX, the company founded by the billionaire Elon Musk to pursue his dream of sending colonists to Mars. Crowds of spectators including President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence watched and cheered as the countdown ticked to zero, and the engines of a Falcon 9 rocket roared to life. Rising slowly at first, the rocket then shot like a sleek, silvery javelin into humid skies, three days after an earlier launch was canceled because of concerns about lightning and other unsafe weather.



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

SpaceX will deliver its crew to the International Space Station.

It was a moment of triumph and perhaps nostalgia for the country, a welcome reminder of America’s global pre-eminence in science, technological innovation and private enterprise at a time its prospects and ambitions have been clouded by the coronavirus pandemic, economic uncertainty and political strife. Millions around the world watched the launch online and on television, many from self-imposed quarantine in their homes. Mr. Trump, who watched from a rooftop at the space center, called it “an inspiration for our country” after the ship lifted off. “Today’s launch makes clear the commercial space industry is the future,” Mr. Trump said in later remarks in the giant Vehicle Assembly Building where the Saturn 5 moon rocket was once stacked. “We have created the envy of the world and will soon be landing on Mars and soon have the greatness in their homes.”

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President Needles as
America Burns

By PETER BAKER
WASHINGTON — With a nation on edge, ravaged by disease, hammered by economic collapse, divided over lockdowns and even face masks and now convulsed once again by race, President Trump’s first instinct has been to look for someone to fight. Over the past week, America reeled from 100,000 pandemic deaths, 40 million people out of work and cities in flames over a brutal police killing of a subdued black man. But Mr. Trump was on the attack against China, the World Health Organization, Big Tech, former President Barack Obama, a cable television host and the mayor of a riot-torn city. While other presidents seek to cool the situation in tinderbox moments like this, Mr. Trump plays with matches. He roars into any melee he finds, encouraging street uprisings against public health measures advanced by his own government, hurling made-up murder charges against a critic, accusing his predecessor of unspecified crimes, vowing to crack down on a social media company that angered him and then seemingly threatening to meet violence with violence in Minneapolis. As several cities erupted in street protests after the killing of George Floyd, some of them resulting in clashes with the police, Mr. Trump made no appeal for calm. Instead in a series of tweets and comments to reporters on Saturday, he blamed the unrest on Democrats, called on “Liberal Governors and Mayors” to get “MUCH tougher” on the crowds, threatened to intervene with “the unlimited power of our Military” and even suggested his own supporters mount a counterdemonstration. The turmoil came right to Mr. Trump’s doorstep on Friday night as hundreds of people protesting Mr. Floyd’s death and the president’s response gathered outside the White House.

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In the Flames, a Fear
of Spiraling Chaos

This article is by John Eligon, Matt Furber and Campbell Robertson.
MINNEAPOLIS — The nation was rocked again on Saturday as demonstrators clashed with police from outside the White House gates to the streets of more than three dozen besieged cities, as outrage over the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis traversed a razor’s edge between protest and civic meltdown. Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota activated thousands of National Guard troops — up to 13,200 — to control protesters in Minneapolis who turned out in droves for the fifth consecutive night on Saturday after burning buildings to the ground, firing guns near the police and overwhelming officers the night before. But he declined the Army’s offer to deploy military police units. Rallies, looting and unrest expanded far beyond Minneapolis, with protesters destroying police vehicles in Atlanta and New York and blocking major streets in Detroit and San Jose, Calif. Crowds in Milwaukee chanted, “I can’t breathe,” and demonstrators in Portland, Ore., lit a fire inside the Multnomah County Justice Center. On Saturday, demonstrators amassed outside City Hall in San Francisco, shut down highway traffic in Miami and attempted to topple a statue in Philadelphia. Curfews were imposed in some of America’s largest cities, including Los Angeles, Chicago and Atlanta. The chaos and rage on such a broad scale evoked the Black Lives Matter demonstrations of recent years; the Los Angeles riots that followed the 1992 acquittal of four police officers charged in connection with the beating of Rodney King the year before; and even the racial strife of the 1960s, when the fury and despair of inner-city African-Americans over racism and poverty erupted in scores of cities, reaching a climax in 1967 and 1968, two years that saw more than 150 riots. This moment has not produced anything close to the violence of

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Greeting the Future, Gingerly,
With Mortarboards and Masks

By JOHN BRANCH and CAMPBELL ROBERTSON
Charlie Forster was at the library one afternoon in March when he ran into a friend from Alderdice High School in Pittsburgh. “I was like, ‘Do you want to come over to my house?’” he said. “So we took the bus home and made grilled cheeses and watched that movie ‘Her,’ which explores isolation and relationships nurtured via electronic devices. Little did he know that the coronavirus that was spreading across the country would give him and his friends their own lesson in being alone. Their new life started to become clear not long after, when Charlie checked in with another friend about plans to meet for lunch. “She was like, ‘My parents — my mom just read an article about social distancing and is outlawing any get-togethers,’” he recalled. And so that was it. That bland Friday afternoon of grilled cheese sandwiches and “Her” was the last social occasion of senior year, and filling in for graduation, prom,



Maya Srinivasan and Brice Patterson graduated from high school without any fanfare.

senior signing day, the band trip, the musical (it was to be “Curtains”), the lingering in late-night diners each night after the musical performances, the house parties, the mindless banter between classes — all of it. Instagram was all they would get. Years from now, generations from now, this senior class’s brush with a pandemic may prove a lasting bond. Some among the 3.7 million high school seniors who are expected to graduate this year will tell people, “Yes, I was in the class of 2020,” and people will nod, knowingly — oh, that year — and

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Trump Delays G7 Meeting
The president, who plans to have the gathering in September, says he wants to include Russia, along with some other nonmember countries. PAGE 9

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Pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong are reckoning with how to fight Beijing’s tightening grip as the virus keeps crowds from gathering. PAGE 18

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