



THE U.S. is curtailing military drills with South Korea. Above, U.S. soldiers train in Yeoncheon on Tuesday.

TRUMP’S PULLBACK ALARMS ALLIES IN ASIA

Drawdown of military assets leaves vacuum that China and North Korea could exploit.

By MICHAEL WILNER

WASHINGTON — The only remaining U.S. aircraft carrier patrolling the Pacific departed Asia through Singapore last week en route to the Middle East, marking the latest step in a steady drawdown of American military assets across the region.

An armada of naval forces, alongside a constellation of air-defense and missile capabilities, has been removed from a theater the Trump administration said just last year would be the battleground of the coming century.

And now, President Trump’s surprise decision this week to curtail military exercises with South Korea has further fueled anxiety across Asia, where Washington’s closest allies fear violent consequences from a vacuum of American power.

Trump said his decision to withdraw U.S. participation from the annual military drills was de-escalatory, claiming they would needlessly provoke North Korea’s dictator, Kim Jong Un, with whom he has recently been in touch.

But he also blamed Seoul for its decision to not take part in his war with Iran.

“I said, ‘Would you like to give us a little hand?’” Trump told reporters. “He said, ‘No thanks,’ and I said, ‘Wait a minute — we have 39,000 soldiers over there,

[See Allies, A7]

Arizona objects to Colorado River plan

The Trump administration’s plan for dealing with worsening water shortages along the Colorado River is encountering strong opposition from Arizona’s leaders, who are warning they could sue to challenge mandatory water cutbacks that they say would harm their state.

A legal fight could end up before the U.S. Supreme Court and further complicate efforts by seven Western states to agree on how to share water from the shrinking river and its reservoirs, which have fallen to record low levels.

Arizona laid out its objections in a sharply worded letter to the federal government last week. It said the Trump administration’s 10-year plan doesn’t adhere to the Colorado River Compact, the 1922 agreement

ABC alleges retaliation in lawsuit against FCC

Network seeks to halt early TV license review

By STEPHEN BATTAGLIO

ABC went to court Tuesday in an attempt to halt the Federal Communications Commission’s early review of its TV licenses, alleging the move is an attack on the broadcast outlet’s right to free speech.

The Disney-owned network asked a U.S. District Court to issue a temporary restraining order to stop the FCC’s action. The agency says it is investigating ABC stations over whether the company’s diversity and inclusion policies are in violation of federal anti-discrimination laws.

But the suit alleges that the FCC is retaliating against ABC due to President Trump’s dissatisfaction with the network’s coverage of his administration. Trump has frequently threatened to have TV station licenses pulled when he believes he is treated unfairly on news and talk programs.

The suit is the latest escalation in the ongoing battle between the FCC and the

broadcast TV industry, which is still regulated by the agency despite its waning influence due to competition from streaming and social media platforms.

Trump remains a heavy consumer of traditional TV and, as the ABC suit states, has frequently threatened to use the government’s leverage in attempts to intimidate news and talk-show outlets he deems unfriendly.

In late December, Trump posted on X that “If Network NEWSCASTS, and their Late Night Shows are almost 100% negative to President Donald J. Trump, MAGA, and the Republican Party, shouldn’t their very valuable Broadcast Licenses be terminated? I say YES!”

The suit alleges the FCC “has not been shy about openly coercing ABC into changing its programming,” citing comments made in the fall by FCC Chair Brendan Carr about late-night host Jimmy Kimmel’s remarks on the president.

[See ABC, A11]

A crypto bank for the Trumps

Democrats condemn ‘brazen ... self-dealing’ in federal approval and seek to block it.

By ANA CEBALLOS

WASHINGTON — Federal regulators have given preliminary approval for a cryptocurrency venture tied to President Trump and his family to operate a digital-asset bank, a decision that has drawn immediate condemnation from Senate Democrats who are now pushing legislation to bar such an action.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), the top Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee, and nine other

Senate Democrats introduced a bill Saturday that would bar the president, the vice president, their immediate family members and other senior government officials from owning or controlling banks.

The measure was proposed a day after the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency — which is part of the Trump administration — granted conditional approval for World Liberty Trust Co. to become a trust bank. The firm was founded in 2024 by two of Trump’s sons and the sons of Steve Witkoff, the Trump administration’s special envoy to the Middle East.

If the firm gets final approval, it would not act like a conventional bank and take deposits or make loans. In-

stead, the chartered bank would be able to issue and manage cryptocurrencies and digital assets. But the move would grant new financial powers to the Trump family’s crypto business, which was already shown to be profitable for the president in his first year back in the White House.

Trump’s financial disclosures show the president has earned more than \$1.2 billion from crypto-related projects as he has pushed to deregulate the digital-asset industry. He hauled in more than \$500 million from his World Liberty Financial business selling new crypto products and is a significant owner of the firm through an entity called DT Marks DEFI, which holds about a

[See Crypto, A7]

Fake L.A. survey deepens distrust of political polls

The results touted by Bass in mayoral race come amid a wave of incorrect predictions.

By BEN WIEDER

When Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass amplified the results last week of a favorable political poll that turned out to be fake, she was inadvertently following in the footsteps of conservative Detroit singer Kid Rock.

In 2017, as Rock — real name Robert Ritchie — publicly contemplated a run for U.S. Senate in his home state of Michigan, he posted on social media the results of a poll conducted by a firm calling itself Delphi Analytica that showed him leading Democratic incumbent Debbie Stabenow.

But those results were bogus. The people behind Delphi Analytica took down their website and refused to be identified, telling a local reporter: “Thanks again and go kid rock.”

Little is known about who was responsible for a poll supposedly conducted

by an outfit calling itself Median Strategies showing Bass with a wide lead in the L.A. mayoral race over City Councilmember Nithya Raman.

The group told The Times on Monday that its results were also fake.

But the episode has revived questions about whether political polling can be trusted, particularly in light of several recent high-profile primary races in which the polls seemed to have gotten the results wrong.

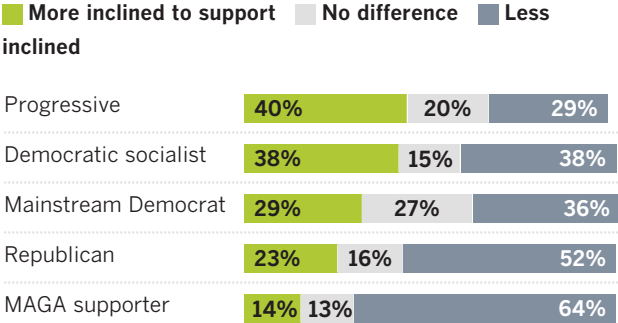
In the Michigan Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate, a number of preelection polls showed progressive Abdul El-Sayed holding a commanding, double-digit lead over Rep. Haley Stevens (D-Mich.), but on election night, El-Sayed eked out a 1-point victory.

In Wisconsin, numerous polls showed progressive state Rep. Francesca Hong leading Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley in the Democratic primary for governor. Crowley narrowly defeated Hong in the primary.

[See Polling, A8]

A step to the left

Asked about each type of candidate, California voters favored a progressive over other descriptions.



Institute of Governmental Studies

AVA HU Los Angeles Times

California voters favor progressives

They are split over democratic socialists, poll says. There’s also a generational divide.

By JUSTINE MCDANIEL

California voters are more inclined to back progressives running for office than mainstream Democrats, a new poll found, though a marked generational divide separates those who favor each camp.

Registered Democratic voters older than 65 were overwhelmingly more inclined to support a candidate identified as a mainstream Democrat, whereas more voters under 40 favored those more aligned with the party’s left wing, including democratic socialists.

The results, from a poll conducted by UC Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies and co-sponsored by The Times, illustrate the highly visible midterm-season debates unfolding within the Democratic Party over age, ideology and the

party’s future.

“There’s particular frustration among the younger voting population,” IGS Poll Director Mark DiCamillo said. “Their views of mainstream Democrats are not that positive, and that’s a long-term problem, I think, for the Democratic Party.”

The poll asked voters about how they perceived candidates described as a progressive, democratic socialist, mainstream Democrat, Republican and MAGA supporter. Voters were asked whether each label made them more inclined or less inclined to back a given candidate, or whether they believed there was not much difference or had no opinion.

Among all California voters, a candidate described as “progressive” drew the broadest support — besting both mainstream Democrats and Republicans, as well as democratic socialists and members of President Trump’s MAGA movement. At 40%, support for progressive candidates registered just 2 percentage points above support for democratic socialists and

[See Voters, A8]

Trump targets rule protecting forests

Proposal would rescind decades-old restrictions on road construction, timber harvesting. **NATION, A4**

Meta on trial over child safety

California’s multi-billion-dollar suit could transform social platforms. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather
Partly sunny and warm. L.A. Basin: 92/70. **B6**

Markets **A12**
Opinion Voices **A13**

High-rise units in Valley for seniors

A \$2-billion affordable housing project will be built at the Warner Center. **BUSINESS, A9**

For the latest news, go to **latimes.com**.



JUSTIN SULLIVAN Getty Images

FLOWERS push through dry, cracked earth in a part of Lake Powell in Utah that was formerly underwater.

that originally divided the water among the states.

“Arizona does not accept a framework that gives the federal government the discretion to select from a wide range of alternatives — including catastrophic cuts ... every two years for the next decade,” Arizona Department of Water Resources Director Tom Buschatzke said in the letter.

The Trump administration’s plan, released July 31, allows for drastic water cuts if they’re deemed necessary, potentially requiring the three downstream states of Arizona, Nevada and California to cut up to 3 million acre-feet per year — as much as 40% of the combined allotments.

For the next two years, state officials say, the

[See River, A6]