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Prayers for a New Year

Worshippers at the Wat Mangkon Kamalawat, a Chinese Buddhist temple, in Bangkok on Monday, the eve of the Lunar New Year.

NEWS ANALYSIS

U.S. Messages Baffle Europe

3 Talks at Munich Vary on What Allies Share

By STEVEN ERLANGER
and DAVID E. SANGER

MUNICH — In the space of just a year, European leaders have heard three descriptions of how the Trump administration is reimagining the American relationship with its allies. Each strikes a bit of a different tone, but all are intended to push them into a new era in which Washington's commitment to defend them faces new limits.

One was delivered by Vice President JD Vance last year, a blistering condemnation of European-style democracy, arguing that waves of immigrants and Europe's restrictions on its own far-right parties pose a greater threat to the continent than Russia's aggression.

The second was a far easier-to-swallow version of a similar message from Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Saturday. He described a hazy and sometimes idealized cultural history shared by Europe and the United States and argued that each faced "civilizational erasure" unless it figured out a way to control its borders.

Then, at the same conference, the most senior defense official to attend, Elbridge Colby, the under secretary of defense for policy, offered a classic American national-security message about shared interests, not values, recommending that both sides focus on "nuts and bolts kind of stuff."

If the Europeans emerged a bit confused, it's understandable.

Mr. Vance and Mr. Rubio could well end up as rivals for the presidential nomination in 2028 — or as running mates. So how they described America's role and purpose with its allies was intended as much for audiences at home. They know each phrase will be weighed by MAGA supporters who are suspicious of the degree to which the Trump administration has intervened around the world, whether in Venezuela or in Iran, Syria or Greenland.

But their immediate audiences were NATO allies. While the

Continued on Page A6

Kansans Rally Behind Mayor Facing Deportation

By MITCH SMITH

COLDWATER, Kan. — A standing-room-only crowd jammed recently into the only courtroom in Comanche County, Kan. Residents came on their lunch breaks, trekked in from their ranches and even closed down a hardware store so they could watch.

They were there for the man at the defendant's table, Joe Ceballos, who just weeks before had been re-elected mayor of Coldwater in a landslide, with 101 votes to his opponent's 20. There had been no time to celebrate. Hours before the votes were tallied, Mr. Ceballos, a legal permanent resident of the United States, was charged in

A Permanent Resident Is Charged With Voting Illegally

state court with voting illegally as a noncitizen.

Now Mr. Ceballos, 55, sat in the high-ceilinged courtroom, glancing downward as a prosecutor from the Kansas attorney general's office rattled off a list of felony charges that could lead to years in prison: three counts of election perjury, three counts of voting without being qualified.

When the charges were an-

nounced a few weeks before the hearing, the municipal politics of Coldwater suddenly became national news. Many conservatives from outside Comanche County framed the case as an example of rampant voter fraud. Before the first court hearing in December, the Trump administration drew attention to the case, pledging to seek Mr. Ceballos's deportation if he were convicted.

"This alien committed a felony by voting in American elections," Tricia McLaughlin, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security, said in a news release that included a photo of Mr. Ceballos and of his signature on a

Continued on Page A11



LOREN ELLIOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Way Out for Hemmed-In Mountain Lions

California's cougars are dying as they're squeezed by freeways. A giant project might help. Page D1.

Cleaning Up Carnival, Bead by Plantable Bead

By JACKIE DELAMATRE

New Orleans is having Mardi Gras regrets, and not just the kind that come from too many daiquiris. In recent years, the city's huge, weeklong party has been producing more waste than ever: an average of 1,123 tons per year for the last decade, according to the city's Sanitation Department.

"It's an environmental catastrophe," said Brett Davis, who runs a

A Greener Mardi Gras in New Orleans

nonprofit group, Grounds Krewe, that is trying to make Carnival greener.

The New Orleans area is especially vulnerable to climate change because of hurricanes and coastal erosion. Yet for weeks of ebullient parading, which culmi-

nate on Tuesday, those problems are forgotten as float riders fling plastic beads, cups, double-balloons and foam footballs at teeming crowds. In the moment, these baubles can seem like treasures. Within days, though, much of what was caught, as well as the excess left on the streets or dangling from oak trees like Spanish moss, ends up in the trash.

Now, a coalition of nonprofit organizations, city officials and sci-

Continued on Page A10



INTERNATIONAL A4-8

Russian Village Seeks Reward

Dozens of Sedanka's men joined the army. Will recognition that the government promised ever arrive? PAGE A8

Beirut Beneath the Drones

Over a year into a cease-fire, the mechanical whir of Israeli drones remains a constant presence. PAGE A4

NATIONAL A9-14

Targeting Vaccine Mandates

Allies of the health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., want to end state laws that require shots for children before entering day care or kindergarten. PAGE A9

2 Killed in Shooting at Rink

An attack at a high school hockey game in Rhode Island left two dead, as well as the shooter, the police said. PAGE A14

OBITUARIES A15, 18

A Titan of Criminology

Alfred Blumstein used systems theory and quantitative analysis to reveal behavioral patterns. He was 95. PAGE A15

SPORTS B7-12

Russia's Mystery Skater

Adelia Petrosian, 18, has the résumé of a medal contender — and ties to coaches who were at the center of a doping scandal. PAGE B7

An All-Star Weekend Revamp

What events would bring back the shine to what should be a celebration of the N.B.A. and its top players? PAGE B11

SCIENCE TIMES D1-8

Thinking Past the Next Storm

This winter on Lake Erie is brutal. New tactics to protect the shoreline call for relying on natural elements. PAGE D1



ARTS C1-6

Racism Traveling Through Air

"Hate Radio," which recreates a broadcast that preceded the Rwandan genocide, is onstage in Brooklyn. PAGE C1

A Praise Fest for Presidents

George W. Bush pays tribute to a predecessor who "ensured America wouldn't become a monarchy, or worse." PAGE C1

OPINION A16-17

Bruce Handy

PAGE A17



THE WEATHER

Today, partly cloudy, not as cold as recent days, high 48. Tonight, partly to mostly cloudy, dry, low 38. Tomorrow, cloudy, periodic rain and drizzle, high 43. Weather map, Page B12.

BANNON KEPT UP LINKS TO EPSTEIN AMID ALLEGATIONS

EAGERNESS TO ADVISE

Relationship Was Meant to Fuel Film, MAGA Leader Insists

By SHARON LaFRANIERE and TERESA MONDRÍA TEROL

Midafternoon in late June 2019, Stephen K. Bannon sent Jeffrey Epstein an excited series of texts. "Dude!!!!!" he wrote. "Is this real Tell me this is real?"

That's the practical result of the Trump administration's yearlong parade of regulatory rollbacks, capped on Thursday by its killing of the "endangerment finding," the scientific determination that required the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate greenhouse gases because of the threat to human health.

"The U.S. no longer has emission standards of any meaning," said Margo T. Oge, who was the E.P.A.'s top vehicle emissions regulator under three presidents and has since advised both automakers and environmental groups.

"Nothing. Zero," she added. "Not many countries have zero."

Transportation is the largest single source of greenhouse gases in the United States.

Car buyers could still vote with their wallets, demanding more fuel-efficient cars. California has vowed to sue to maintain stricter standards.

The Department of Transportation still regulates fuel economy under rules meant to conserve oil, and the E.P.A. still regulates other tailpipe emissions, like nitrogen oxides, that harm human health.

But last year, the Trump administration proposed weakening the fuel economy standards to largely irrelevant levels. The Republican-controlled Congress set civil penalties for violations at \$0, essentially making them voluntary for automakers. In addition, Congress last year blocked California's clean-car rules.

The bottom line is that the United States is set to stand apart from a majority of the world's industrialized nations, which have mandatory fuel economy or greenhouse gas tailpipe emissions rules.

The Biden administration had sought to tighten limits on emissions to encourage automakers to

Continued on Page A10

In a statement to The New York Times, Mr. Bannon said his relationship with Mr. Epstein was strictly professional.

"I am a filmmaker and TV host with decades of experience inter-

Continued on Page A13

ROBERT DUVALL, 1931-2026

Protean Actor Who Lit Screen Amid Corleones and Napalm

By CLYDE HABERMAN

Robert Duvall, who drew from a seemingly bottomless reservoir of acting craftsmanship to transform himself into a business-focused Mafia lawyer, a faded country singer, a cynical police detective, a bullying Marine pilot, a surfing-obsessed Vietnam commander, a mysterious Southern recluse and scores of other film, stage and television characters, died on Sunday. He was 95.

His death was announced in a statement by his wife, Luciana Duvall, who said he had died at home. She gave no other details. He had long lived on a sprawling horse farm in The Plains, Va., west of Washington.

Mr. Duvall's singular trait was to immerse himself in roles so deeply that he seemed to almost disappear into them — an ability that was "uncanny, even creepy the first time" it was witnessed, said Bruce Beresford, the Australian who directed him in the 1983 film "Tender Mercies."

In that film, Mr. Duvall played Mac Sledge, a boozy, washed-up

country star who comes to terms with life through marriage to a widow with a young son. The performance earned him an Academy Award for best actor; his sole Oscar in a career that brought him six other nominations in both leading and supporting roles.

"He is the character," Mr. Beresford said of Sledge. "He's not Duvall at all."

Mr. Duvall, though, wasn't buy-

Continued on Page A18

SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Robert Duvall won one Oscar; he was nominated for six more.

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Continued on Page A18