



HardWear by Tiffany

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The New York Times

THE WEATHER

Today, drizzle early followed by some sun, high 67. Tonight, partly cloudy, mainly dry, low 61. Tomorrow, partial sunshine with a shower, high 75. Weather map, Page A22.

MACRON IS VOICE FOR FRUSTRATION OVER WAR IN IRAN

GLOBAL ECONOMIC PAIN

Calling for Serious Talk as Trump Threatens 'Stone Age' Attack

This article is by Mark Landler, Erika Solomon and Thomas Fuller.

PARIS — Scathing criticism by the French president. Taunts and more missile strikes from Iran. Surging oil prices.

President Trump's 19-minute speech on Wednesday night, in which he threatened to bomb Iran "back to the Stone Ages" and said the war would last several more weeks, failed to appease deep global anxieties over where the war was leading.

President Emmanuel Macron of France expressed blunt disapproval on the handling of the war on Thursday, chastising Mr. Trump for speaking cavalierly and contradicting himself.

"When we're serious, we don't say every day the opposite of what we said the day before," Mr. Macron told reporters in response to a question about Mr. Trump's threat to continue the war and bomb Iran intensively. "And, maybe, one shouldn't speak every day."

Mr. Macron, speaking of Mr. Trump's verbal attacks against NATO, also said, "If you create doubt every day about your commitment, you hollow it out."

His comments came during a trip through Asia, the region hit hardest by Iran's selective closure of the Strait of Hormuz to oil tankers and other maritime traffic crucial to the global economy.

Iran's defiance on Thursday came in the form of mocking statements and missiles fired across the Middle East.

"Your information about our military power and equipment is incomplete," a spokesman for the leadership of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps said in a video statement on Thursday. It came after Mr. Trump, in his speech on Wednesday, said that Iran's ability to launch missiles and drones had been "dramatically curtailed."

Iran's tolerance for pain appears far higher than Mr. Trump anticipated, and despite devastating losses to its arsenal, it retains some ability to strike Israel with missiles. It did so even while Mr. Trump spoke about the war on Wednesday evening.

Talks with Iran about a deal to end the conflict, to the degree they are substantive, have so far shown little promise. The key metrics of success described at various points by Mr. Trump — keeping Iran from possessing the fuel to make a nuclear weapon, helping the Iranian people topple a government much of the populace despises and reopening the Strait



ARASH KHAMMOUSHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
An area hit by U.S.-Israeli strikes in Tehran in March.

ActBlue Was Told It May Have Mised Congress

By REID J. EPSTEIN and SHANE GOLDMACHER

WASHINGTON — In early 2025, a law firm working for ActBlue, the Democratic fund-raising behemoth, delivered the organization a startling warning.

The firm concluded that ActBlue's chief executive had given a potentially misleading response to congressional Republican investigators in a 2023 letter explaining how the organization vetted donations to ensure that they

TRUMP FIRES BONDI AFTER BUMPY TENURE



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES
Attorney General Pam Bondi is being replaced by Todd Blanche, her deputy, on an interim basis.

Attorney General's Work on Epstein and Prosecutions Drew His Anger

By TYLER PAGER and GLENN THRUSH

President Trump fired Attorney General Pam Bondi on Thursday, removing the nation's top law enforcement officer after privately venting his frustrations for months over her handling of the Epstein files and her failed efforts to prosecute his political enemies.

In a social media post, Mr. Trump said he was replacing Ms. Bondi with Todd Blanche, her deputy, on an interim basis.

"We love Pam, and she will be transitioning to a much needed and important new job in the private sector, to be announced at a date in the near future," Mr. Trump wrote.

Ms. Bondi is the second cabinet member in recent weeks to lose her job, after Mr. Trump ousted Kristi Noem, the secretary of homeland security, last month.

The firing of Ms. Bondi, 60, ends a turbulent 14-month tenure as attorney general in which she tried desperately to appease a boss who demanded unimpeded control of the Justice Department to pursue politically motivated investigations against targets of his choosing, even when prosecutors warned that there was no evidence to do so.

In the process, Ms. Bondi surrendered much of the department's historic independence and oversaw the exodus of experienced career officials, leaving the department's public corruption and national security units, along with many local U.S. attorneys' offices, weakened and demoralized.

Yet Mr. Trump remained annoyed by Ms. Bondi's inability to secure indictments of people he referred to as "scum" during a speech in the department's Great Hall about a year ago.

The president's support for Ms. Bondi has steadily eroded since last summer, when her early

stumbles in managing the release of the Epstein files created a political liability for Mr. Trump among a segment of his supporters. He has also complained about her shortcomings as a communicator and TV surrogate.

Whoever replaces Ms. Bondi on a permanent basis will face the difficult task of executing on Mr. Trump's appetite for retribution. Ms. Bondi tried to fulfill Mr. Trump's demands — launching investigations and trying to indict some of his political opponents, purging agents and lawyers who worked on cases involving the president and installing inexperienced loyalists in top prosecu-

torial positions around the country. But even still, Ms. Bondi came up short, largely because judges and juries rejected the department's efforts.

At a high-profile hearing in February on Capitol Hill, where lawmakers grilled Ms. Bondi on the Epstein investigation, she refused to apologize to survivors of Mr. Epstein, and offered few detailed answers and no admissions of fault. Mr. Trump said privately that he liked how she jostled with Democrats, but it was seen overall as a damaging performance.

Ms. Bondi spent much of the last day making her case to stay in the cabinet, according to two people familiar with the situation. But her team could sense those chances slipping away when Mr. Trump issued only a lukewarm statement when The New York Times requested comment on reporting that she was about to be removed.

"Attorney General Pam Bondi is a wonderful person and she is doing a good job," he said on Wednesday, a day before he announced that she was fired.

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Trump Has Boxed Himself In On a War With No Clear End

By DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON — More than a month into a war that he insists will come to an end within two or three weeks, President Trump has put himself in a strategic box from which he is finding no easy exit.

Talks with Iran about a deal to end the conflict, to the degree they are substantive, have so far shown little promise. The key metrics of success described at various points by Mr. Trump — keeping Iran from possessing the fuel to make a nuclear weapon, helping the Iranian people topple a government much of the populace despises and reopening the Strait

of Hormuz — remain in the distance, at best.

Iran's tolerance for pain appears far higher than Mr. Trump anticipated, and despite devastating losses to its arsenal, it retains some ability to strike Israel with missiles. It did so even while Mr. Trump spoke about the war on Wednesday evening.

That televised, prime-time address was intended to reassure Americans that the costs of the war would be transitory, that an end to hostilities and a return to normal economic life were imminent. But the markets reacted to his speech with deep skepticism.

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WITH INTERNET AS 'COOKBOOK,' DEADLY DRUGS FLOOD STREETS

By MATT RICHTER

THE NEW DRUG WAR

Thwarting Good Intentions

On a warm night three summers ago, Kai Raydon, a student at the University of Colorado, Boulder, opened a package of orange-white powder that he had purchased through an encrypted site on the dark web. He had ordered quaaludes, an illegal sedative, but wasn't taking chances.



MEREDITH KOHUT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

He placed a sample on a fentanyl test strip: negative. Mr. Raydon weighed out a gram using a digital scale that sat on the coffee table in his room at his fraternity. Grateful Dead posters decorated the walls. Dead, his

rat terrier, sat with him on the couch. With a rolled-up 50-peso bill, he inhaled the gram.

"Just tried the ludes and they are just as good as people say," he messaged a friend on social media. "Holy Hell. Doses are 200."

His girlfriend, Emma Buck, had been in the hallway on a call. She returned to find Mr. Raydon pacing — an odd reaction, "uncharacteristic of a sedative," she said.

It wasn't a sedative. It was something new and unknown — and part of an explosion of novel lab-made chemicals that is redefining the illicit drug market. In recent years, hundreds of ultra-potent drugs have emerged, often identified by health authorities and law enforcement only after they have shown up in the toxicology report of someone who has overdosed.

Most of these substances originate in traditional medical research, in scientific papers and patents that were published by legitimate scientists and companies and then copied and modified by illicit chemists. This is the science-to-street pipeline, and it has come to dominate the illicit drug market.

In his fraternity room that night, July 22, 2023, Mr. Raydon started to feel sick. He took a cold shower, put on an anti-nausea bracelet and lay with his head on Ms. Buck's lap. The pair had fallen hard for each other that spring. He was a neuropharmacology major, fascinated by the brain. "He was the most intellectually curious

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INTERNATIONAL A4-9

Staying, Not Staying Quiet

While many Russian journalists have fled into exile, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dmitri A. Muratov is still there and still speaking out. PAGE A4

NATIONAL A10-23

Artemis II, Flying to the Moon

The crew members are the first humans to travel to the moon in over 50 years. They will not land on the surface but will inform future visits. PAGE A12

BUSINESS B1-6

An Unhappy Labor Balance

Lower immigration has brought supply in line with shaky demand, but economists fear a slow-moving job market is at risk of topping over. PAGE B1

WEEKEND ARTS C1-10

Palette of Crossed Boundaries

A new exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum highlights the Senegalese artist Iba Ndiaye's myriad influences from across the globe. PAGE C1

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Stephen I. Vladeck

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