



MARY F. CALVERT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

In the past five years, at least 33 instructors have been charged with misconduct with students, a Times investigation found.

## ‘I Felt Trapped’: Sexual Abuse in J.R.O.T.C.

### Retired Military Officers Repeatedly Prey on Their Teenage Students

This article is by **Mike Baker, Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs and Ilana Marcus.**

PICAYUNE, Miss. — With the rifle skills she honed in the Mississippi backwoods, Victoria Bauer had a path to escape the trap of drugs and dead-end jobs she saw most everywhere around her. Her future was in the Marines, she decided, and she had an idea about how to get there.

Across the way from her freshman algebra class, Ms. Bauer approached Steve Hardin, the retired Navy intelligence officer who guided the high school’s Junior Re-

serve Officers’ Training Corps, a leadership program sponsored by the U.S. military at high schools across the country. He welcomed her into the fold, she said, and seemed interested in how her family, which traced roots back to the Four Winds Cherokee of Louisiana, had been displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Soon, her 45-year-old J.R.O.T.C. instructor was messaging her on Snapchat late into the night, telling her that it would “drive the guys crazy” if she wore a “small bikini” during the trip to their next out-of-state shooting competition. Then one night in 2015 as he drove her home from rifle

practice, she told investigators, Mr. Hardin pushed his hand into her pants and penetrated her with his fingers — the start of what she said was months of sexual assaults. Ms. Bauer, who was 15 at the time, feared that resisting him would jeopardize her shot at advancement through the J.R.O.T.C. ranks or a military career.

“I gave all the body-language signals that I didn’t want it,” Ms. Bauer said in an interview. “I didn’t feel like I had a choice.”

For more than a century, the J.R.O.T.C. program has sought to instill U.S. military values in American teenagers, with classes

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## Sri Lanka Said To Oust Leader In Mass Revolt

By **SKANDHA GUNASEKARA and MUJIB MASHAL**

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — With his home overrun by protesters, his powerful family on the run and the nation he once controlled in revolt against him, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa of Sri Lanka agreed to resign on Saturday, according to the country’s top lawmaker.

Mr. Rajapaksa’s apparent decision to step down was the culmination of months of public pressure and protest. Thousands of people on Saturday braved police curfew, fuel shortage and a shut-down of public trains to descend on the capital, Colombo, to register their fury over the government’s inability to address a crippling economic crisis.

Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, the speaker of Parliament and an ally of the president, said Mr. Rajapaksa agreed he would resign on July 13 “to ensure a peaceful transition of power” after the country’s top political leaders urged him on Saturday to step down. There was no direct confirmation about the potential resignation from Mr. Rajapaksa, who is in hiding and who has defied previous calls to leave office.

Sri Lanka has run out of foreign-exchange reserves for imports of essential items like fuel and medicine, and the United Nations has

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### A City of Joy and Grief

In Lviv, Ukraine, babies are born just steps away from where fallen soldiers are laid to rest. Page 8.

## A New Hampshire Town’s Lesson in Democracy

By **DAN BARRY**

CROYDON, N.H. — The tiny New Hampshire town of Croydon fits the New England of the imagination, with its cozy general store, one-room schoolhouse and local museum open by appointment. The only thing missing is supposed to be missing: a stoplight.

But it’s not just the Rockwellian setting that makes this community of 800 seem quintessentially

American. People here have just experienced a fractious come-to-Jefferson moment that has left many with a renewed appreciation for something they had taken for granted: democracy.

“Showing up. That’s the big lesson,” said Chris Prost, 37, a Croydon resident who runs a small brewery from a barn at the back of his house. “And not just showing up, but also knowing what’s going on.”

Hope Damon, 65, a dietitian

who is pursuing a new career as a result of her town’s recent crisis, agreed. What happened here, she said, “could happen most anywhere.”

To understand what happened — and is happening — in Croydon, you should remember the New Hampshire motto: “Live Free or Die.” This is, after all, the only state that does not require adults to wear seatbelts.

You also should know that New

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### NEWS ANALYSIS

## Ukraine War Now a Battle Of Endurance

### Global Fatigue Testing Commitments of West

By **PETER BAKER and DAVID E. SANGER**

WASHINGTON — Another day, another weapons shipment: On Friday, the Pentagon announced a new transfer of precision-guided shells and multiple rocket launchers to Ukraine, the latest armaments heading east. But will there come a day when that system begins to slow?

More than four months after Russia invaded Ukraine, a war that was expected to be a Russian blitzkrieg only to turn into a debacle for Moscow has now evolved into a battle of inches with no end in sight, a geopolitical stamina contest in which President Vladimir V. Putin is gambling that he can outlast a fickle, impatient West.

President Biden has vowed to stand with Ukraine for “as long as it takes,” but neither he nor anyone else can say how long that will be or how much more the United States and its allies can do over that distance, short of direct military intervention. At some point, officials acknowledge, U.S. and European stocks of weapons will run low; while the United States has authorized \$54 billion in military and other assistance, no one expects another \$54 billion check when that runs out.

So Mr. Biden and his team are searching for a long-term strategy at a time when the White House sees the dangers of escalation increasing, the prospect for a negotiated settlement still far-off and public weariness beginning to set in at home and abroad.

“I worry about the fatigue factor of the public in a wide range of countries because of the economic costs and because there are other pressing concerns,” said Senator Chris Coons, Democrat of Delaware and a close ally of Mr. Biden’s who attended the NATO summit meeting in Madrid last month.

“I think we need to be deter-

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## Biden, at 79, Shows Signs of Age And Aides Fret About His Image

By **PETER BAKER**

WASHINGTON — When President Biden leaves Tuesday night for a four-day swing through the Middle East, he will presumably be more rested than he would have been had he followed the original plan.

The trip was initially tacked onto another journey last month to Europe, which would have made for an arduous 10-day overseas trek until it became clear to Mr. Biden’s team that such extended travel might be unnecessarily taxing for a 79-year-old president, or “crazy,” as one official put it.

Aides also cited political and diplomatic reasons to reorganize the extra stops as a separate trip weeks later. But the reality is that managing the schedule of the oldest president in American history presents distinct challenges. And as Mr. Biden insists he plans to run for a second term, his age has increasingly become an uncomfortable issue for him, his team and his party.

Just a year and a half into his

## FEARING OIL JOLT, U.S. PITCHES PLAN ON GLOBAL PRICES

### UNTESTED IDEA PUSHED

### Effort to Keep Russian Crude Flowing While Punishing Putin

By **JIM TANKERSLEY**

WASHINGTON — Relief at the gas pump coupled with this past week’s news that businesses continue to hire at a blistering clip have tempered many economists’ fears that America is heading into a downturn.

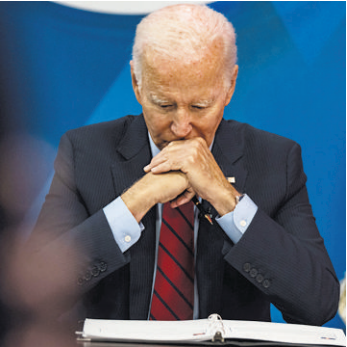
But while President Biden’s top aides are celebrating those economic developments, they are also worried the economy could be in for another serious shock later this year, one that could send the country into a debilitating recession.

White House officials fear a new round of European penalties aimed at curbing the flow of Russian oil by year-end could send energy prices soaring anew, slamming already beleaguered consumers and plunging the United States and other economies into a severe contraction. That chain of events could exacerbate what is already a severe food crisis plaguing countries across the world.

To prevent that outcome, U.S. officials have latched on to a never-before-tried plan aimed at depressing global oil prices — one that would complement European sanctions and allow critical flows of Russian crude onto global markets to continue but at a steeply discounted price.

Europe, which continues to guzzle more than two million barrels of Russian oil each day, is set to enact a ban on those imports at the end of the year, along with other steps meant to complicate Russia’s efforts to export fuel globally. While Mr. Biden pushed Europe to cut off Russian oil as punishment for its invasion of Ukraine, some forecasters, along with top economic aides to the president, now fear that such policies could result in huge quantities of Russian oil — which accounts for just under a tenth of the world’s supply — sud-

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HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Biden insists that he plans to run for a second term.

first term, Mr. Biden is already more than a year older than Ronald Reagan was at the end of two terms. If he mounts another campaign in 2024, Mr. Biden would be asking the country to elect a leader who would be 86 at the end of his tenure, testing the outer boundaries of age and the presidency. Polls show many Americans consider Mr. Biden too old, and some Democratic strategists do not think he should run again.

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### SPORTS 24-27

#### An Upset at Wimbledon

Elena Rybakina, the 23rd-ranked player, rebounded from a first-set loss to defeat second-ranked Ons Jabour for the singles title. On Tennis. PAGE 24

### SUNDAY STYLES

#### One Nation, on Meds

The pandemic’s full toll on mental health is still unclear, but data shows a jump in the use of prescription drugs for conditions like depression. PAGE 7

### METROPOLITAN

#### Two Friends and a Secret Past

Tin Chin and Mo Lin were inseparable at the homeless shelter. But one of the men wasn’t who he seemed to be, and it changed his best friend’s life. PAGE 1

### OBITUARIES 21-23

#### A ‘Sopranos’ Mobster

Tony Sirico, a familiar face in Woody Allen movies, became widely known for his portrayal of Paulie Walnuts on the hit HBO series. He was 79. PAGE 22

### SUNDAY REVIEW

#### Frank Bruni

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