

'DIOXIN LAWYER' IS POISED TO LEAD SUPERFUND SITES

LONGTIME DOW INSIDER

Under His Watch, Claims
of Misleading Data in
Toxic Cleanup

By HIROKO TABUCHI
and TRYGGVI ADALBJORNSSON

The lawyer nominated to run the Superfund toxic cleanup program is steeped in the complexities of restoring polluted rivers and chemical dumps. He spent more than a decade on one of the nation's most extensive cleanups, one involving Dow Chemical's sprawling headquarters in Midland, Mich.

But while he led Dow's legal strategy there, the chemical giant was accused by regulators, and in one case a Dow engineer, of submitting disputed data, misrepresenting scientific evidence and delaying cleanup, according to internal documents and court records as well as interviews with more than a dozen people involved in the project.

The lawyer, Peter C. Wright, was nominated in March by President Trump to be assistant administrator at the Environmental Protection Agency overseeing the Superfund program, which was created decades ago to clean up the nation's most hazardous toxic waste sites. He is already working at the agency in an advisory role as he awaits congressional approval. If confirmed, Mr. Wright would also oversee the emergency response to chemical spills and other hazardous releases nationwide.

E.P.A. officials pointed to Mr. Wright's expertise in environmental law and his tenure at Dow as valuable qualifications. The White House on Saturday referred questions to the E.P.A.

He spent 19 years at Dow, one of the world's largest chemical makers, and once described himself in a court deposition as "the company's dioxin lawyer." He was assigned to the Midland cleanup in

Continued on Page 12



MAURICIO LIMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

China has built a \$50 million space station in Argentina's Patagonia region, a symbol of its growing clout in Latin America.

China's Long, Quiet Push Into Latin America

A Move That Undermines U.S. Strategic Power in the Hemisphere

By ERNESTO LONDOÑO

QUINTUCO, Argentina — The giant antenna rises from the desert floor like an apparition, a gleaming metal tower jutting 16 stories above an endless wind-whipped stretch of Patagonia.

The 450-ton device, with its hulking dish embracing the open skies, is the centerpiece of a \$50 million satellite and space mission control station built by the Chinese military.

The isolated base is one of the most striking symbols of Beijing's long push to transform Latin America and shape its future for generations to come — often in ways that directly undermine the United States' political, economic and strategic power in the region.

The station began operating in March, playing a pivotal role in China's audacious expedition to the far side of the moon — an endeavor that Argentine officials say they are elated to support.

But the way the base was negotiated — in secret, at a time when Argentina desperately needed investment — and concerns that it could enhance China's intelligence gathering capabilities in the hemisphere have set off a debate in Argentina about the risks and benefits of being pulled into China's orbit.

"Beijing has transformed the dynamics of the region, from the agendas of its leaders and businessmen to the structure of its economies, the content of its politics and even its security dynamics," said R. Evan Ellis, a professor of Latin American studies

at the United States Army War College.

For much of the past decade, the United States has paid little attention to its backyard in the Americas. Instead, it declared a pivot toward Asia, hoping to strengthen economic, military and diplomatic ties as part of the Obama administration's strategy to constrain China.

Since taking office, the Trump administration has retreated from that approach in some fundamental ways, walking away from a free trade pact with Pacific nations, launching a global trade war and complaining about the burden of Washington's security commitments to its closest allies in Asia and other parts of the world.

All the while, China has been discreetly

Continued on Page 8

NEW U.S. TACTIC IN AFGHANISTAN URGES RETREAT

A STRIKING CONCESSION

Pullback to Cities Would
Effectively Cede Vast
Areas to Taliban

By THOMAS GIBBONS-NEFF
and HELENE COOPER

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is urging American-backed Afghan troops to retreat from sparsely populated areas of the country, officials said, all but ensuring the Taliban will remain in control of vast stretches of the country.

The approach is outlined in a previously undisclosed part of the war strategy that President Trump announced last year, according to three officials who described the documents to The New York Times on the condition of anonymity. It is meant to protect military forces from attacks at isolated and vulnerable outposts, and focuses on protecting cities such as Kabul, the capital, and other population centers.

The withdrawal resembles strategies embraced by both the Bush and Obama administrations that have started and stuttered over the nearly 17-year war. It will effectively ensure that the Taliban and other insurgent groups will hold on to territory that they have already seized, leaving the government in Kabul to safeguard the capital and cities such as Kandahar, Kunduz, Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad.

The retreat to the cities is a searing acknowledgment that the American-installed government in Afghanistan remains unable to lead and protect the country's sprawling rural population. Over the years, as waves of American and NATO troops have come and left in repeated cycles, the govern-

Continued on Page 10

TALIBAN TALKS American diplomats met with the group's representatives in Qatar, insurgents say, a shift in U.S. policy. PAGE 10

Abuse Scandal Forces Cardinal To Give Up Post

By ELISABETTA POVOLEDO
and SHARON OTTERMAN

ROME — Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, the former archbishop of Washington, from the College of Cardinals, ordering him to a "life of prayer and penance" after allegations that the cardinal sexually abused minors and adult seminarians over the course of decades, the Vatican announced on Saturday.

Acting swiftly to contain a widening sex abuse scandal at the highest levels of the Roman Catholic Church, the pope officially suspended the cardinal from the exercise of any public ministry after receiving his resignation letter Friday evening. Pope Francis also demanded in a statement that the prelate remain in seclusion "until the accusations made against him are examined in a regular canonical trial."

Cardinal McCarrick appears to be the first cardinal in history to

Continued on Page 16



Theodore
McCarrick

Still Standing at White House, They're Stepping Up Their Profiles

By MAGGIE HABERMAN
and KATIE ROGERS

WASHINGTON — They disappointed climate change activists who thought they would keep President Trump from leaving the landmark Paris accord. They enraged Democrats and even some Republicans by not pushing back against his immigration policies, and alienated business allies by their silence over threats to Nafta. They regularly faced news stories about their unpopularity.

Even their relationship with the president seemed to suffer.

Several times Mr. Trump joked that he "could have had Tom Brady" as a son-in-law. "Instead," the president said, according to five people who heard him, "I got Jared Kushner."

And yet, after 18 months of bruising internal White House conflicts and bitter criticism that they have failed to be a moderating influence on the president, both Mr. Kushner and his wife, Ivanka Trump, the president's elder daughter, are still in Washington and still working as aides to Mr. Trump. They are as comfortable — and as close to the center of the president's orbit — as they have ever been.

As scrutiny of the couple often referred to as Javanka became increasingly intense during the president's first year, Mr. Kushner and Ms. Trump seemed to retreat from public view, and after several of their allies in the White House



AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump have waited out, and in some cases ground down, their critics.

departed, there was a near-constant stream of questions about whether they would follow.

It did not help that the president had gone from telling aides to "talk to Jared," as he did during the campaign, to telling them that "Jared hasn't been so good for me." At various points, Mr. Trump told friends and his chief of staff, John F. Kelly, that he wished both Jared and Ivanka would return to

New York.

But as one staff member after another has disappointed him and has departed or been dispatched, Mr. Trump has retreated into the familiarity of his family — his daughter, above all, and eventually, her husband. As Mr. Trump, cut off from dissenting voices and convinced of his own popularity, has become more emboldened, so have his daughter and son-in-law.

It was only in May that Mr. Kushner had his security clearance restored after months of questions about whether he was in peril in the investigation by the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia. Mr. Mueller's investigators have not publicly cleared Mr. Kushner, and Mr. Kushner's advisers issued misleading state-

Continued on Page 18

Political Middle Is All but Ignored In Georgia Race

By KEVIN SACK
and ALAN BLINDER

ATLANTA — The Republican won the nomination Tuesday after branding himself a politically incorrect conservative who would "round up criminal illegals" and haul them to the border in his very own pickup. The Democrat all but opened her campaign by demanding that the iconic carvings of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson be sandblasted off Stone Mountain.

Almost overnight, Georgia's captivating governor's race between Brian Kemp and Stacey Abrams has taken on the dimensions of a defining moment, one that will, regardless of outcome, determine what the state represents and how it is perceived. That voters chose these two candidates reflects how Americans are embracing politicians on the basis of culture and identity, and how Georgia's politics are catching up with its rapid demographic change: The nonwhite population has grown to 40 percent from 29 percent since 1990.

But Georgia's political middle, long the dominant force behind the state's thriving commerce and pragmatic leadership, suddenly finds itself all but abandoned.

Continued on Page 13



INTERNATIONAL 4-10

'A Good Afterlife' for Fido

In Thailand, owners spoil their pets in life — and often cremate them in a Buddhist rite when they die. PAGE 5

Facebook Takes More Heat

A U.K. panel investigating "fake news" has accused Facebook of providing "disingenuous" answers. PAGE 4

NATIONAL 11-18

3 Perish in California Wildfire

A woman in Redding, Calif., and her two great-grandchildren were said to have died, and President Trump authorized federal aid for disaster relief. PAGE 16

A Modern-Day Ellis Island

A bus station in McAllen, Tex., is the door to the American dream once migrants are freed from detention. PAGE 14

THE MAGAZINE

The Great Meat Mystery

Why are tick bites suddenly causing a strange reaction in some people who eat beef and pork? PAGE 30



SUNDAY STYLES

Giddy Up, Girlfriend!

At Breyerfest, a passion for horses — be they real or plastic — roams freely and without mockery. PAGE 1

Vacation? Nah, Creative Hiatus

Sunny beaches are so last year. These overachievers devote their summer to boat building and book writing. PAGE 1

SPORTSSUNDAY

Something New in the Surf

Albee Layer pulled off what looked like an original move on a surfboard. Soon after, the royalty of surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding began a debate about what to call it. PAGE 1

Thomas Secures Tour Title

Geraint Thomas effectively sealed his first Tour de France title by protecting the yellow jersey in the penultimate stage time trial. He's set to become the first Welshman to claim victory. PAGE 5

SUNDAY REVIEW

Kim Brooks

PAGE 1



SUNDAY BUSINESS

Super Bowl of Beauty Industry

Beautycon is equal parts competitive shopping scene, feel-good festival and marketing bonanza. Think Sephora meets Coachella. PAGE 1

