

A bid for a third term? 'It could get messy'

If Trump does try to run again, he might set off legal battles over ballot access in states nationwide.

By MICHAEL WILNER

WASHINGTON — In a private meeting at a global summit in Buenos Aires in 2018, China's president, Xi Jinping, turned to President Trump and said it was a shame he couldn't stay in power beyond the two-term limit set by the U.S. Constitution. Trump agreed.

It was just one of several instances in which Trump mused over the prospects of an extra-constitutional reign in the White House.

"He's talked about it for a really long time," said John Bolton, Trump's national security advisor from 2018 to 2019, recalling the meeting. "It's on his mind, and he'd like to do it."

The possibility of Trump running for a third term gained fresh attention this weekend after the president told NBC that he was "not joking" about pursuing one.

"There are methods," Trump said. "But I'm not — it is far too early to think about it."

Attorneys, scholars and state officials disagree. The knowledge that Trump may bid to stay in power, in a direct challenge to the 22nd Amendment, already has election officials in secretaries of state offices throughout the country bracing for legal battles that could begin as soon as next year.

The plain language of the amendment, which states that "no person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice," will also factor into local races starting next year for secretaries of state across the nation — key offices that will determine ballot qualification and interpret, or ignore, inevitable rulings on Trump's eligibility from the courts.

"Individual states and federal courts would almost certainly move to keep him off ballots," said Alex Conant, former communications director for Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential campaign and a founding partner of Firehouse Strategies. "It could," he added, "get messy."

Some of Trump's most prominent current and former attorneys doubt that the president has a path to a third term, absent a laborious, politically challenging and time-consuming constitutional amendment. An amendment must be approved by three-fourths of the states (38 out of 50).

Pam Bondi, the presi- [See Third term, A4]



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times
KEITH AARON ROBINSON, 44, shares a warm moment with Brianna Choudary, 26, in front of his tent in Skid Row in downtown Los Angeles in March. Robinson has been living homeless there for seven years.

Breakup looms for L.A. service agency

Board may split up city-county homeless authority and its funds. Some at City Hall are unnerved.

By DAVID ZAHNISER AND REBECCA ELLIS

To its supporters, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority was just starting to hit its stride.

Last summer, the little-known but well-funded agency announced that homelessness had effectively leveled off across Los Angeles County after years of increases. Results for the city of Los Angeles were even more encouraging, with the number of "unsheltered" homeless people — those living on the street — falling by more than 10%.

LAHSA's top executives have promised to show more progress against the humanitarian crisis in the coming months, when the latest homelessness numbers are formally released.

But instead of drawing praise, the city-county homeless agency is under fire from multiple directions — and on the verge of being pulled apart.

On Tuesday, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to vote on a plan to move more than \$300 million and hundreds of workers out of LAHSA and into a new county homelessness department. Officials in the cash-strapped city of L.A. recently began exploring a similar step.

Meanwhile, a federal judge has been savaging LAHSA. At a hearing last week, U.S. District Judge David O. Carter criticized LAHSA's numbers as untrustworthy, assailed it over its financial controls and even denounced the location of its offices.

"I will never go into LAHSA's office building again because it's ostentatious," said Carter, who oversees settlement agreements on the allocation of homeless services.

LAHSA's top executive, Va Lecia Adams Kellum, sent Carter a letter last week spelling out the improvements her agency has been working on. Carter responded by accusing her of making "meaningless" promises.

Adams Kellum, who took over LAHSA two years ago, said the day after the court hearing that her agency has been working to improve its data collection and upgrade its system for tracking available shelter beds. LAHSA increased the number of homeless people moved off the street and into interim [See LAHSA, A10]

LAFD actions kept in secrecy

Agency has denied public records requests and stayed silent on key questions about equipment and decisions in Palisades fire

By ALENE TCHEKMEKYAN AND PAUL PRINGLE

More than 2½ months after flames leveled much of Pacific Palisades, the Los Angeles Fire Department and Mayor Karen Bass' office have maintained extraordinary secrecy about the city's preparations for and response to the inferno.

The Fire Department, the mayor and her representatives have yet to provide answers to basic questions from The Times about whether they approved the LAFD's plan to protect the Palisades before the Jan. 7 blaze. Nor have they addressed The Times' questions about which LAFD crews were the first to arrive at the scene.

At the same time, the

LAFD has denied dozens of public records requests from journalists and others related to its handling of the fire, including 911 calls, dispatch logs and internal communications about preparations for the extreme winds.

Two former LAFD chief officers say those records should have been available for release since the early days of the fire.

Some victims of the Palisades conflagration have criticized the lack of transparency, while open government advocates say the city's refusal to release public records runs afoul of disclosure laws.

"It's absolutely frustrating," said Sue Pascoe, who lost her home of 30 years in the fire and is the editor of the Palisades news website Circling the News. "People

[See Secrecy, A7]

A cautionary tale from Myanmar

7.7 temblor raises quake preparedness questions in Asia and beyond

By STEPHANIE YANG

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Weak building codes and years of government unrest appear to have contributed to the devastation from the magnitude 7.7 Myanmar earthquake, a leading seismic safety expert in the region said.

The Friday earthquake originated near Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city of about 1.5 million, from rubbing tectonic plates along the Sagaing fault, which runs through the center of the country. The temblor has killed more than 2,000 people and injured more than 3,900.

More than 600 miles away in Bangkok, the Thai capital, buildings buckled. But stronger building codes — and distance from the epicenter — left Thailand with [See Myanmar, A4]



THEIN ZAW Associated Press
PROXIMITY to the quake epicenter and weak building codes have left Myanmar with a heavy toll. Above, a Buddhist monk passes a collapsed pagoda in Mandalay.

Urgent call to assess bridges for collapse risk

A year after Baltimore disaster, the NTSB identifies seven in California for scrutiny.

By JENNY JARVIE

A year after the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, an independent government agency urged the owners of

seven bridges in California — including the landmark Golden Gate Bridge — to urgently assess their risk of a catastrophic collapse.

In a March 18 report, the National Transportation Safety Board identified 68 bridges across the United States as not having undergone a vulnerability assessment based on recent vessel traffic. The bridges, it said, have an "unknown level of risk of collapse from a vessel

collision." The report, part of the ongoing investigation into the Baltimore bridge collapse, said the owners of the bridges — all built over navigable waterways frequented by oceangoing vessels — "are likely unaware of their bridges' risk of catastrophic collapse from a vessel collision and the potential need to implement countermeasures to reduce the bridges' vulnerability."

Some of the California bridge owners told The Times that, after the Baltimore bridge collapse, assessments were underway.

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District said in a statement that it was in "full compliance with all state and federal regulations, including federal bridge inspection and evaluation requirements" and that the famed [See Bridges, A7]

USC women vie for Final Four berth

Trojans took on Connecticut late Monday. For coverage, go to e-newspaper and latimes.com/sports.

End of an era in Kings' booth

After 44 seasons, Nick Nickson is set to retire as team's play-by-play announcer. **SPORTS, B10**

Weather

Partly sunny. L.A. Basin: 68/48. **B6**

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

How tariffs will affect car buyers

Expect new-vehicle prices to go up by several thousand dollars, experts say. **BUSINESS, A6**

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