



## Saudi murder becomes a gift

NASR, FROM PAGE 9

advice and decide to end the Yemen war. The government in Riyadh may also find it necessary to mend relations with Iran to rebalance its relations with Turkey, which has been aligned with a buoyant Qatar and was further angered by the Saudi assassination on Turkish soil.

Remaining calm, in turn, might give Iran's leaders greater confidence in their own bargaining power, perhaps to the point of talking to the United States about its nuclear and missile programs. The ruling circles in Tehran already seem confident that the economy has absorbed much of the shock of American sanctions and that Iran can sell enough oil and have enough trade with Europe, China, Russia and India to keep its economy afloat. Conservatives and moderates have formed a united front to rally the population to the flag and to fend off any popular discontent that the United States might hope economic hardship would bring.

The Trump administration has derided the nuclear deal, asserting that it was failing to curb Iran's regional influence and claiming to want a new deal strong enough to do just that. But Mr. Trump will now find it even more difficult to deliver on his promise of forcing Iran to come to the table on his terms. If Iran comes at all, it will not be in a position of abject weakness. All it needs to do is remain committed to the deal it signed with Barack Obama and let Mr. Trump recognize that his "maximum pressure" strategy falls short. Then Tehran might be ready to talk.

From the start, the Trump administration thought it could rein in Iran's regional influence by forging a close

partnership with Saudi Arabia's young crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman. But a series of heavy-handed Saudi missteps, culminating in the murder of Mr. Khashoggi, have backfired, leaving Iran with much more room for strategic initiatives.

Relying on Saudi Arabia to contain Iran was always questionable. Saudi Arabia has never been truly successful at rolling back Iran's regional presence, and in recent years Iran's influence in the region has only grown. For example, Saudi Arabia has for all practical purposes washed its hands of

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Syria, leaving it to the United States to deal with Iran and the endgame of that conflict. The greatest missteps started in 2015 with the ill-conceived war in Yemen, followed last year by a blockade that failed to ostracize Qatar and then a week-long detention of the

prime minister of Lebanon that failed to lessen his reliance on Hezbollah. All were clumsy attempts to make other Arabs afraid to deal with Iran and its allies. All had the opposite effect, with the region's principal players — America's friends among them — seeing Saudi Arabia as a greater menace than Iran.

The Khashoggi affair has been a watershed event. It brought into sharp relief the weakness at the core of Mr. Trump's strategy, even as it weakened the crown prince himself, along with support for his partnership with Amer-

ica. The ability of Saudi Arabia to help Israel contain Iran and provide political cover for a final deal with the Palestinians now looks far-fetched. Israel's hand has been weakened, while Turkey — which also wants greater regional influence and has shared Iran's concerns about the budding alliance between Israel and Saudi Arabia — has gained stature.

It is now clear that Saudi Arabia will not be able to lead a regional coalition to force Iran out of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and then Yemen. Unless Mr. Trump plans to send large numbers of troops to do that, and then have them stay on to make sure Iranian influence does not return, he can hope for regional stability only by focusing on first bringing the Middle East's wars to an end. Then he would have to set aside his high hopes that "maximum pressure" can successfully deal with Iran on regional issues. Accepting those truths would not eliminate Iran's influence, but it could set limits on it and provide time for the Arab world to recover and rebuild — which ultimately is the best way to check Iranian power.

As for Iran, it doesn't need to flex its muscles. It just needs to wait for the Trump administration to fully appreciate the balance of power in the Middle East. As Mr. Trump's mirage of an Arab order evaporates, a stark reality emerges: There is no credible Arab challenge to Iran's regional influence, nor is there any prospect of reducing it with American threats and bluster.

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## Reform starts with bishops

John Gehring

Several hundred Catholic bishops from around the country have gathered in Baltimore for a national meeting at a time when many of us faithful are grieving, angry and running out of patience. The horrifying scale of the clergy sexual abuse crisis, as chronicled by a Pennsylvania grand jury report in August that revealed widespread abuse and cover-up over several decades, underscores an obvious but essential point: Bishops can't be trusted to police themselves.

Moreover, a recent investigation by The Boston Globe and The Philadelphia Inquirer found that more than 130 bishops — nearly one-third of those still living — have been accused of failing to adequately respond to sexual abuse in their dioceses. New explosions are still coming. Last month, a former assistant to Bishop Richard Malone of Buffalo released hundreds of secret documents that showed how the bishop continued to send predator priests back into parishes. Bishop Michael Bransfield of West Virginia resigned in September after claims that he had sexually harassed younger priests.

It's not the first meeting of its kind: 16 years ago, after The Globe's groundbreaking "Spotlight" investigation, bishops met in Dallas to adopt zero-tolerance policies. Any priest who had abused a minor would be removed. Civilian review boards would investigate claims of clergy misconduct. Those policies led to the removal of hundreds of priests, but the bishops didn't implement procedures that held themselves to the same standard of accountability.

The Vatican, including Pope Francis, has also not done enough. A proposal to create a Vatican tribunal to evaluate accusations against bishops — an idea floated by the pope's own Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors — has gone nowhere.

Marie Collins, an abuse survivor who resigned in frustration from the commission, rightly observed that "history will judge Pope Francis on his actions, not his intentions."

The failure to hold bishops accountable perpetuates a privileged culture of clericalism that lets the hierarchy

operate under different rules.

Bishops were scheduled to vote on policies to address the abuse crisis in Baltimore. But in a surprise move, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, stunned his fellow bishops and media by announcing that the Vatican wanted those plans put on hold until after a February meeting in Rome called by Pope Francis that will bring together bishops from around the world. That could prove to be prudent for the final outcome, but it's hard to overstate how tone deaf the timing is given the growing Catholic anger in the pews.

Whatever credibility the Catholic Church has left as a voice for justice in public life, the clock is ticking down fast. Standards and systems that prioritize transparency and accountability

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are essential. But church leaders should also recognize that technical or bureaucratic responses are insufficient to address the urgency of this moment. The Catholic Church faces a profound crisis of legitimacy. This crisis is not only the product of sexual predation. Moving forward, Catholic leaders should be more open to at least discussing a host of thorny issues. The church's patriarchal culture — most exemplified in excluding women from the priesthood — and its teachings about human sexuality and gender are rejected by not only many Americans but also a sizable share of faithful Catholics in the pews.

How does the church hope to influence the wider culture when pastors are ignored by many of its own flock?

At this dark crossroads for the Catholic Church, there is an opportunity for Pope Francis and the bishops to take a fresh look at the church and begin a prayerful discernment about the limits of patriarchy, human rights for L.G.B.T. people and the exclusion of women from the clergy. These will be uncomfortable but necessary topics to explore if the Catholic Church wants an era of renewal and its leaders hope to reclaim the ability to speak more persuasively to a diverse public square.

The final report from a recently concluded monthlong meeting at the Vatican that brought together young Catholics and hundreds of bishops from around the world acknowledged the need for a broader conversation about the church's teachings on sexuality. There are questions, the report noted, "related to the body, to affectivity and to sexuality that require a deeper anthropological, theological, and pastoral exploration." While conservative bishops such as Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia led the charge to make sure the descriptor "L.G.B.T." was not included in a final report — a pre-synod working document used the term for the first time in Vatican history — that subtle but significant opening is an invitation for a long-overdue conversation.

Church teaching isn't set by a poll or the shifting winds of popular opinion. At the same time, the church is not a static institution. Doctrine does change and develop. The Second Vatican Council met from 1962 until 1965, a time when bishops opened the windows of the church to the modern world. The council brought historic changes in the way Catholicism understood democracy, the Jewish faith, the role of lay Catholics, interfaith dialogue and liturgy.

These reforms were intensely debated at the time and still divide many Catholics. When Pope Paul VI affirmed the church's ban on birth control a few years after the council ended — ignoring the advice of his own commission made up of lay leaders, bishops, theologians and priests — the decision provoked widespread backlash from leading figures at Catholic universities. Even some brave clergymen spoke out in protest. Most faithful Catholics just ignored the teaching.

The question isn't whether the church should stay the same or change. Paradoxically, the church has always done both. The more essential question is whether a 2,000-year-old institution that thinks in centuries can once again stand with a foot firmly planted in the best of its tradition while stepping into the future renewed and relevant to a new generation.

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## A generational divide

MARINIC, FROM PAGE 1

children under 6. Other cities are trending rapidly in the same direction.

And yet the national political establishment ignores such developments. It continues to insist on recent immigrants' becoming "German" not just linguistically but also culturally. In a place with no dominant ethnic group, an emphasis on cultural homogeneity is not just unrealistic — it's harmful.

Not only is it harmful to the recently arrived, but the insistence on a coherent, centrist German political establishment masks the fact that nationalist, authoritarian and xenophobic beliefs have long been present in the German middle class. Not until 1985 were German citizens ready for a president like Richard von Weizsäcker who would clearly state that the end of World War II was not a defeat but a step toward freedom and democracy.

More recently, when anti-immigrant protesters — many of them baby boomers or older — began their wave of protest marches in 2015, most of the people in Germany and abroad were surprised. But the authoritarianism and the anger about foreigners had been there all along; as the protesters themselves said, the problem was no one listened. And no one provided hope.

Then, to compound the problem, the establishment, scared of this new political force, made accommodations to it — moving right on issues like immigration in an attempt to dampen the far right's appeal. But that only made the far right seem more acceptable to the mainstream, while alienating younger voters.

The good news is that Germany is moving forward despite itself. So long excluded from politics, younger Germans are taking to the streets. According to the organizers of one recent mass demonstration in Berlin, called "#unteilbar" ("inseparable"), 250,000 people marched in favor of a more open society — a number that swamps even the largest far-right marches. Yet

the establishment has stayed silent.

In recent elections in Bavaria, the Green Party was led by Katharina Schulze, 33, and Ludwig Hartmann, 40. In the past their youth alone would have been considered disqualifying. Instead, they were able to draw in enough disaffected young Bavarians to win 17.5 percent of the vote, up from 8.6 percent in 2013 — an astonishing total for a left-leaning party in such a conservative state.

Bavarian voters aren't alone: Recent polls show that as many as 50 percent of Germans can at least imagine voting for the Green Party, particularly because of its progressive position on migration and diversity.

Put differently, the real challenge in Germany is not so much the left-right divide as it is a generational split.

**Germany looks less and less like the country boomers remember, or imagine.**

The older generations, reared on consensus, are not used to open public debate, let alone diversity. But the younger ones are opting for a new social order that includes people of other ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations. They do not fear immigrants as much as they fear the fact that they can't afford housing or taking care of their parents once they get old.

Younger generations have always had different needs from their elders, but in the past the establishment has found ways to meet those needs without ceding power.

That's no longer acceptable to young Germans. They don't just demand a more equitable, open society. They want to shape it. If Germany's establishment resists them, it will set the country on the path to years of social turmoil.

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## Be afraid of 'bigness'

WU, FROM PAGE 9

new levels of scrutiny for mega-mergers like the proposed union of T-Mobile and Sprint.

But we also need judges who better understand the political as well as economic goals of antitrust. We need prosecutors willing to bring big cases with the courage of trustbusters like Theodore Roosevelt, who brought to heel the empires of J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller, and with the economic sophistication of the men and women who challenged AT&T and Microsoft in the 1980s and 1990s. Europe needs to do its part as well, blocking mergers, especially those like Bayer's recent acquisition of Monsanto that threaten to put entire global industries in just a few hands.

The United States seems to constantly forget its own traditions, to forget what this country at its best stands for. We forget that America pioneered a kind of law — antitrust — that in the words of Roosevelt would "teach the masters of the biggest corporations in the land that they were not, and would not be permitted to regard themselves as, above the law." We have forgotten that antitrust law had more than an economic goal, that it was meant fundamentally as a kind of constitutional safeguard, a check against the political dangers of unaccountable private power.

As the lawyer and consumer advocate Robert Pitofsky warned in 1979, we must not forget the economic origins of totalitarianism, that "massively concentrated economic power, or state intervention induced by that level of concentration, is incompatible with liberal, constitutional democracy."

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