

Pentagon Deal Creates Schism Within Google

Identity Crisis Over Use of Tech by Military

This article is by **Scott Shane, Cade Metz and Daisuke Wakabayashi.**

WASHINGTON — Fei-Fei Li is among the brightest stars in the burgeoning field of artificial intelligence, somehow managing to hold down two demanding jobs simultaneously: head of Stanford University's A.I. lab and chief scientist for A.I. at Google Cloud, one of the search giant's most promising enterprises.

Yet last September, when nervous company officials discussed how to speak publicly about Google's first major A.I. contract with the Pentagon, Dr. Li strongly advised shunning those two potent letters.

"Avoid at ALL COSTS any mention or implication of AI," she wrote in an email to colleagues reviewed by The New York Times. "Weaponized AI is probably one of the most sensitized topics of AI — if not THE most. This is red meat to the media to find all ways to damage Google."

Dr. Li's concern about the implications of military contracts for Google has proved prescient. The company's relationship with the Defense Department since it won a share of the contract for the Maven program, which uses artificial intelligence to interpret video images and could be used to improve the targeting of drone strikes, has touched off an existential crisis, according to emails and documents reviewed by The Times as well as interviews with about a dozen current and former Google employees.

It has fractured Google's work force, fueled heated staff meetings and internal exchanges, and prompted some employees to resign. The dispute has caused grief for some senior Google officials, including Dr. Li, as they try to straddle the gap between scientists with deep moral objections and salespeople salivating over defense contracts.

The advertising model behind Google's spectacular growth has provoked criticism that it invades web users' privacy and supports dubious websites, including those peddling false news. Now the company's path to future growth, via cloud-computing services, has divided the company over its stand on weaponry. To proceed with big defense contracts could drive away brainy experts in artificial intelligence; to reject such work would deprive it of a potentially huge business.

The internal debate over Maven, viewed by both supporters and opponents as opening the door to much bigger defense contracts, generated a petition signed by about 4,000 employees who de-

Continued on Page A15



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

South Lawn Dash

President Trump, with Ivanka Trump and Mariano Rivera behind him, oversaw the White House Sports and Fitness Day.

After His Murder, a Twist Was Revealed. By Him.

By **NEIL MacFARQUHAR**

MOSCOW — The assassination bore all the hallmarks of yet another contract killing carried out in the murky shadows of the conflict pitting Russia against Ukraine.

A photo of the victim, a dissident Russian journalist, showed him lying face down Tuesday in a vermilion pool of his own blood. He was found by his wife, and died on the way to a hospital from mul-

Reporter Part of Sting in Russia-Ukraine Feud

tipled gunshot wounds to the back, said the police in Kiev, Ukraine's capital.

Then on Wednesday, the journalist, Arkady Babchenko, to all appearances very much alive, walked into a news conference that Ukrainian security officials

had called to discuss his "murder."

"First of all, I would like to apologize that all of you had to live through this, because I know the horrible feeling when you have to bury your colleagues," Mr. Babchenko told stunned reporters after the gasps died down. "Separately, I want to apologize to my wife for all the hell she had to go through."

The staged death, said Vasily S. Gritsak, the head of the Ukraine Security Service, was a sting op-

Continued on Page A10

A Racist Post, A TV Apology, A Trump Gripe

By **KATIE ROGERS
and EMILY COCHRANE**

WASHINGTON — It was not the racist comment that made the president angry. It was the apology from ABC.

Wading into a public outcry over remarks by the comedian Roseanne Barr, President Trump did not condemn the Twitter post about a black former aide to President Barack Obama that led to the swift cancellation of Ms. Barr's ABC sitcom. Instead, he expressed his own grievances on Wednesday with what the network's on-air personalities have said about him, and insisted he was the one who deserved an apology.

Specifically, the president called out Robert A. Iger, the chairman of Disney, the parent company of ABC, who had phoned the former Obama aide, Valerie Jarrett, on Tuesday to apologize for Ms. Barr's language. The president, referring to himself in the third person, complained on Twitter that Mr. Iger had "never called President Donald J. Trump to apologize for the HORRIBLE statements made and said about me on ABC."

His response was not a total surprise. Mr. Trump has reacted to other divisive events not by issuing statements of unity or moral

Continued on Page A19

BIG BANKS IN LINE FOR LOOSER CURBS ON RISKY TRADES

RELAXING VOLCKER RULE

Regulators Move to Ease Limits Imposed After 2008 Meltdown

By **EMILY FLITTER
and ALAN RAPPEPORT**

Big banks are getting a big reprieve from a postcrisis rule aimed at curbing risky behavior on Wall Street.

Federal bank regulators on Wednesday unveiled a sweeping proposal to soften the Volcker Rule, a cornerstone of the 2010 law that was enacted after the financial crisis to rein in risky trading. The change would give Wall Street banks more freedom to make their own complex bets — activities that can be highly profitable but also leave them more vulnerable to losses.

The rule, part of the broader Dodd-Frank law, was put in place to prevent banks from making unsafe bets with depositors' money. It took five agencies three years to write it and has been criticized by Wall Street as too onerous and harmful to the proper functioning of financial markets. On Wednesday, the Federal Reserve proposed easing several parts of the rule, and four other regulators are expected to soon follow suit, kicking off a public comment period that is expected to last 60 days.

The loosening of the Volcker Rule is part of a coordinated effort underway in Washington to relax rules put into place in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. Big banks, emboldened by President Trump's deregulatory agenda and a more favorable political climate in Washington, have begun pressing for changes to several postcrisis rules, including the Volcker Rule.

Last week, Mr. Trump signed into law a bipartisan bill that will free thousands of small and medium-size banks from the Dodd-Frank law, and on May 21, he signed a law rescinding a consumer rule aimed at preventing discrimination by auto lenders. The Fed and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency recently proposed easing limits on how much the largest banks can borrow and the Fed also proposed changes to the stress tests that banks must undergo each year to determine whether they can withstand an economic downturn.

Mr. Trump's acting director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Mick Mulvaney, has also engaged in a rapid series of regulatory changes since November, including halting new investigations, freezing new hires and preventing the agency from col-

Continued on Page A15



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A Bottleneck for American Recycling

Recyclables are being dumped in landfills after China stopped taking in "foreign garbage." Page B1.

U.S.-Backed Offensive in Syria Fights ISIS Remnants, and Time

By **ERIC SCHMITT**

WASHINGTON — An American-backed ground offensive to wipe out the last pockets of Islamic State fighters in eastern Syria has been reignited over the past month in an attempt to beat back the militants' ability to wage guerrilla attacks.

The mission against the Islamic State has been invigorated by the return of top Kurdish commanders, a surge in French commandos, the arrival of Navy fighter jets and some secret sleuthing by Iraqi spies.

But the campaign may have little more than six months to hunt down the few hundred fighters — not enough time to extinguish a

threat that is quickly moving underground.

The new momentum remains imperiled by President Trump's on-again, off-again threat to withdraw some 2,000 American troops in Syria, including hundreds of Special Operations advisers and commandos.

A force of allied Kurds and Arabs in Syria's east has served as the United States' most effective battleground ally against the Islamic State, also known as ISIS. But a spate of Turkish attacks last winter against other Kurds, in northwest Syria, prompted the Kurdish fighters to peel away

Continued on Page A6

An Epidemic of School Massacres Traces Its Roots to Columbine

This article is by **Manny Fernandez, Julie Turkewitz and Jess Bidgood.**

SANTA FE, Tex. — The exact reasons a teenage gunman shot his fellow students and teachers here at Santa Fe High School remain a mystery. His model for carrying it out is more clear.

The 17-year-old junior wore a black trench coat and fired a sawed-off shotgun, the same attire and weaponry used by the two gunmen who killed a dozen students and a teacher at Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999.

He wore a T-shirt with the phrase "Born to Kill" on it in bold, similar in design to those worn by the Columbine attackers, which read "Wrath" and "Natural Selection."

His crude arsenal included can-



CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

IN 2007 Media swarmed the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Va., for weeks after a shooting.

isters of carbon-dioxide gas and Molotov cocktails, two types of explosives used by the Columbine gunmen.

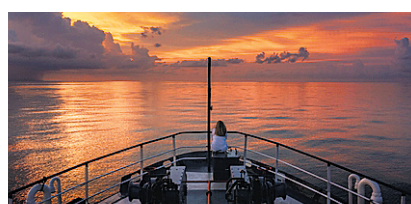
The picture he had posted of his trench coat on Facebook showed a

small red-star medallion with the Communist hammer-and-sickle on the collar, the same type of button a Columbine gunman attached to his boot.

It was not the first time a high

school suddenly engulfed in gunfire and death found itself looking for clues in the random symbolism of a nearly 20-year-old mass shooting that has become, it

Continued on Page A14



INTERNATIONAL A4-11

Waiting for Rohingya at Sea

A search-and-rescue boat scoured the Andaman Sea for Muslims fleeing persecution in Myanmar. PAGE A10

U.S. Tariffs on Allies Loom

The United States is poised to impose steel and aluminum tariffs on the European Union, and maybe others. PAGE A11

NATIONAL A12-19

Catching ICE's Eye at School

Get-tough discipline policies by the Education Department are making undocumented students vulnerable to deportation. PAGE A12

New Details on Comey Firing

A memo suggests Rod J. Rosenstein may have given the president a cover story for firing James B. Comey. PAGE A16

NEW YORK A20-21, 24

Giuliani Is Out at Home

When Rudolph W. Giuliani, the former mayor, was wooed at Yankee Stadium, it revealed a transformed city. PAGE A20



ARTS C1-8

The Complicated 'Americans'

The finale of the FX series raised questions of who deserved sympathy and why, James Poniewozik writes. PAGE C1

Earnest, but Not Terribly Ironic

Jesse Green calls "Jagged Little Pill," a musical built on Alanis Morissette songs, "intermittently thrilling." PAGE C1

SPORTSTHURSDAY B9-14

Flawed Case Ends N.F.L. Run

Keith Mumphy was twice cleared of a charge of sexual assault while at Michigan State. A third hearing, which happened without his knowledge, derailed his life. Sports of The Times. PAGE B9

Cavaliers-Warriors, Round 4

Cleveland and Golden State will compete for a title for a fourth straight year, but getting to the championship round was not as easy as many had expected. An N.B.A. finals preview. PAGE B9

EDITORIAL, OP-ED A22-23

Gail Collins

PAGE A23



THURSDAY STYLES D1-8

Ruling Over Broadway

Pay attention to the director Joe Mantello, the wizard behind the curtains of "Wicked," "Three Tall Women" and "The Boys in the Band." PAGE D1



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