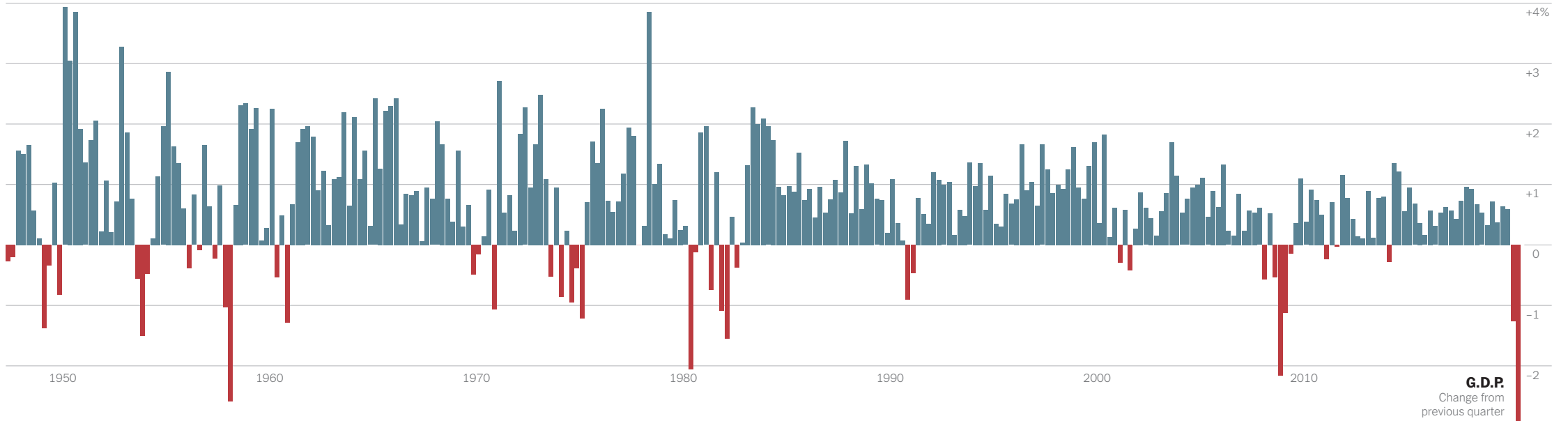


VIRUS WIPES OUT 5 YEARS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH



NEWS ANALYSIS

Crises Abound, Yet Trump Chooses to Attack Election

By ALEXANDER BURNS

For several years, it has been the stuff of his opponents' nightmares: that President Trump, facing the prospect of defeat in the 2020 election, would declare by presidential edict that the vote had been delayed or canceled.

Never mind that no president has that power, that the timing of federal elections has been fixed since the 19th century and that the Constitution sets an immovable expiration date on the president's term. Given Mr. Trump's contempt for the legal limits on his office and his off-expressed admiration for foreign dictators, it hardly seemed far-fetched to imagine he would at least attempt the gambit.

But when the moment came on Thursday, with Mr. Trump suggesting for the first time that the election could be delayed, his proposal appeared as impotent as it was predictable — less a stunning assertion of his authority than yet another lament that

his political prospects have dimmed amid a global public-health crisis. Indeed, his comments on Twitter came shortly after the Commerce Department reported that American economic output contracted last quarter at the fastest rate in recorded history, underscoring one of Mr. Trump's most severe vulnerabilities as he pursues a second term.

Far from a strongman, Mr. Trump has lately become a heckler in his own government, promoting medical conspiracy theories on social media, playing no constructive role in either the management of the coronavirus pandemic or the negotiation of an economic rescue plan in Congress — and complaining endlessly about the unfairness of it all.

"It will be a great embarrassment to the USA," Mr. Trump tweeted of the election, asserting without evidence that mail-in

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Second-Quarter Contraction Sets a Grim Record

By BEN CASSELMAN

The coronavirus pandemic's toll on the nation's economy became emphatically clearer Thursday as the government detailed the most devastating three-month collapse on record, which wiped away nearly five years of growth.

Gross domestic product, the broadest measure of goods and services produced, fell 9.5 percent in the second quarter of the year as consumers cut back spending, businesses pared investments and global trade dried up, the Commerce Department said.

The drop — the equivalent of a 32.9 percent annual rate of decline — would have been even more severe without trillions of dollars in government aid to households and businesses.

But there is mounting evidence that the attempt to freeze the economy and defeat the virus has not produced the rapid rebound that many envisioned. A surge in coronavirus cases and deaths across the country has led to a renewed pullback in economic activity, reflecting consumer unease and renewed shutdowns. And much of the government support is on the verge of running out, with Washington at an impasse over

Stalled Rebound in U.S. Makes Outlook Bleak for Coming Months

next steps.

"In another world, a sharp drop in activity would have been just a good, necessary blip while we addressed the virus," said Heather Boushey, president of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, a progressive think tank. "From where we sit in July, we know that this wasn't just a short-term blip. We did not get the virus under control."

Data from Europe shows what might have been. Germany on Thursday reported a drop in second-quarter G.D.P. that was even steeper than the U.S. decline. But in Germany, coronavirus cases fell sharply and remain low, which has allowed a much stronger economic rebound in recent weeks.

In the United States, the rebound appears to have stalled. More than 1.4 million Americans filed new claims for state unemployment benefits last week, the Labor Department said Thursday. It was the 19th straight week that

the tally exceeded one million, an unheard-of figure before the pandemic. A further 830,000 people filed for benefits under the federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, which supports freelancers, the self-employed and other workers not covered by traditional unemployment benefits. In total, some 30 million people are receiving unemployment benefits, a number that has come down only slowly as new layoffs — many of them permanent job losses, as opposed to the spring's temporary furloughs — offset gradual rehiring. Some economists now fear that the monthly jobs report coming next week will show that total employment fell in July after two months of strong gains. The slow recovery, and signs of backsliding, are taking a toll on consumer confidence, which fell in July after rising in June.

"Not only have we plateaued, but we may be losing ground," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at the accounting firm Grant Thornton in Chicago. "To have these kinds of numbers in July when many in Congress hoped this would be over by summer underscores how unique and persistent the Covid crisis is."

The economic collapse in the

second quarter was unrivaled in its speed and breathtaking in its severity. The decline was more than twice as large as in the Great Recession a decade ago, but occurred in a fraction of the time. The only possible comparisons in modern American history came during the Great Depression and the demobilization after World War II, both of which predated

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Wielding Fear, Wallace's Way

The Politics of Division Echo in Trump's Words

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — The nation's cities were in flames amid protests against racial injustice and the fiery presidential candidate vowed to use force. He would authorize the police to "knock somebody in the head" and "call out 30,000 troops and equip them with two-foot-long bayonets and station them every few feet apart."

The moment was 1968 and the "law and order" candidate was George C. Wallace, the former governor of Alabama running on a third-party ticket. Fifty-two years later, in another moment of social unrest, the "law and order" candidate is already in the Oval Office and the politics of division and race ring through the generations as President Trump tries to do what Wallace could not.

Comparisons between the two men stretch back to 2015 when Mr. Trump ran for the White House denouncing Mexicans illegally crossing the border as rapists and pledging to bar all Muslims from entering the country. But the parallels have become even more pronounced in recent weeks after the killing of George Floyd as Mr. Trump has responded to demonstrations by sending federal forces into the streets to take down "anarchists

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POOL PHOTO BY ALYSSA POINTER

An honor guard carried the body of John Lewis out of Ebenezer Baptist Church on Thursday.

In Atlanta, a Final Salute to an American Giant

By RICHARD FAUSSET and RICK ROJAS

ATLANTA — Three former presidents and dozens of other dignitaries were drawn to Ebenezer Baptist Church on Thursday to bid farewell to John Lewis, a giant of Congress and the civil rights era whose courageous protests guaranteed him a place in American history. But even as the funeral looked back over Mr. Lewis's long life, it also focused very much on the tumultuous state of affairs in the country today.

The most pointed eulogy came from former President Barack Obama, who issued a blistering critique of the Trump administra-

At Lewis Funeral, Calls to Defend the Vote

tion, the brutality of police officers toward Black people and efforts to limit the right to vote that Mr. Lewis had shed his blood to secure.

The political tone of the ceremony came as little surprise. Mr. Lewis, who died July 17 at the age of 80 after a battle with pancreatic cancer, had spent more than three decades in Congress as a thorn in the side of Republican administrations. And he and President Trump had traded public slights

since before Mr. Trump took office.

Mr. Obama compared Mr. Lewis to an Old Testament prophet and credited him with directly paving the way for the nation's first Black president. He also took aim at the forces that he said were working against the equality for Black Americans and other oppressed people that Mr. Lewis had spent a lifetime championing.

"Bull Connor may be gone," Mr. Obama said, referring to the 1960s-era public safety commissioner of Birmingham, Ala., who turned fire hoses and dogs on civil rights protesters. "But today, we witness, with our own eyes, police

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Europe Tries New Strategy To Limit Tech

By ADAM SATARIANO

LONDON — European Union leaders are pursuing a new law to make it illegal for Amazon and Apple to give their own products preferential treatment over those of rivals that are sold on their online stores.

In Britain, officials are drawing up a law to force Facebook to make its services work more easily with rival social networks, and to push Google to share some search data with smaller competitors.

And in Germany, authorities are debating a rule that would let regulators essentially halt certain business practices at the tech companies during an antitrust investigation.

Europe's lawmakers and regulators have shifted to a new stage in their battle to limit the power of the world's biggest tech companies. The region has long been at the forefront of using existing antitrust laws and levying multi-billion dollar penalties against the tech giants, but officials now say that those tactics have not gone far enough in altering the behavior of Apple, Amazon, Google and Facebook. So they are drafting at least half a dozen new laws and regulations to aim at the heart of how those tech companies' businesses work.

Europe has embarked on its legal blitz just as the United States has started flexing its own tech regulatory muscles. On Wednesday, the chief executives of Ama-

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MOHAMMAD PONIR HOSSAIN/REUTERS

Jamalpur in flooding that has killed dozens in Bangladesh.

Torrent of Rain Floods a Fourth Of Bangladesh

By SOMINI SENGUPTA and JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Torrential rains have submerged at least a quarter of Bangladesh, washing away the few things that count as assets for some of the world's poorest people — their goats and chickens, houses of mud and tin, sacks of rice stored for the lean season.

It is the latest calamity to strike the delta nation of 165 million people. Only two months ago, a cyclone pummeled the country's southwest. Along the coast, a rising sea has swallowed entire villages.

While it's too soon to ascertain what role climate change has played in these latest floods, Bangladesh is already witnessing a pattern of more severe and more frequent river flooding than in the past along the mighty Brahmapu-

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NATIONAL A15-21

Mars-Bound, With Helicopter

NASA's Perseverance rover lifted off with its own four-pound experimental Marscopter on board.

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No Charges in Ferguson Killing

A new prosecutor had reopened the inquiry into a police officer's shooting of Michael Brown in 2014.

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TRACKING AN OUTBREAK A4-10

Blind Spot on Native Americans

There's no doubt the virus has hit Native Americans hard, but statistical gaps make it difficult to properly allocate resources to fight back.

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Prisoners Could Be Freed Early

A Covid-19-related bill in New Jersey would free more than 3,000 inmates who are within a year of release.

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INTERNATIONAL A11-14

Darfur's Woes Outlast Dictator

Despite the ouster last year of the Sudanese ruler Omar Hassan al-Bashir, militia violence has surged.

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BUSINESS B1-7

Big Tech Turns Up the Gaslight

Now that lawmakers have begun doing their homework, it is unclear if the tech executives' strategy of giving evasive answers will continue to work on Capitol Hill, Kevin Roose writes.

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Profiting From a U.S. Crisis

Foreign investors have found a way to put money into the Federal Reserve's emergency lending program, though the rules stipulate that only American companies can participate.

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EDITORIAL, OP-ED A24-25

David Brooks

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WEEKEND ARTS C1-12

The 1964 Olympics Revisited

But for the pandemic, the world's elite athletes would again be in Tokyo, transformed by design decades ago.

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Reimagining Audubon's Birds

Kerry James Marshall explores the societal "pecking order" and the Black experience in his paintings.

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OBITUARIES A22-23

A 2012 Presidential Hopeful

Herman Cain, who ran a pizza chain before entering politics, became an early supporter of Donald J. Trump's 2016 campaign. He was 74.

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SPORTSFRIDAY B9-12

Safely Bubble-Wrapped

For some leagues, a restricted environment has proved mostly impervious to an outbreak. But for other leagues, it's not as feasible.

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