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▲ *The injured at a hospital after a bombing in Douma, in eastern Ghouta, Syria, on Feb. 6*

ON THE COVER
AND ABOVE:
Photographs
by Mohammed
Badra—EPA-EFE/
Shutterstock

HEROES, LOST AND FOUND
RE "SUPER POWERED"

[Feb. 19]: As a comic-book fan, I enjoyed the movie *Black Panther* as well as your fantastic article. However, I am disgusted by Disney's lack of appreciation for comics. The average person does not realize the brilliance of the comic books, and Disney is doing nothing to promote them. It's becoming difficult to get into comics, and those who love them are extorted by overpricing.

Fearghal Desmond,
CORK, IRELAND

I TAKE ISSUE WITH A statement Jamil Smith makes in his article: that in Trump, white people again have a President. Donald Trump makes me ashamed to be white. I speak for many white people when I say that in my heart, Barack Obama will always be my real President.

Jennifer Rabuchin,
BURBANK, CALIF.

YOUR ARTICLE CITES A DISparity between the median net worth of white (\$171,000) and black (\$17,600) households. While those numbers are alarming, the article doesn't take into account that many black households have only one wage earner, usually female, and that the educational level generally has an effect on future earning possibilities. When writing about

poverty among blacks, one should examine the cause, which in many cases is the abandonment of the family by the adult black male. They miss the opportunity to be the real heroes in the black community.

Gerard J. Moore,
OCEAN VIEW, N.J.

A STAIN ON THE CHURCH

RE "POPE FRANCIS HAS Jeopardized His Morals" [Feb. 19]: Pope Francis, as with many of his predecessors, has unequivocally demonstrated how far the Catholic Church has detached from a sound moral base. Many around the world had hoped that the church's new broom would sweep clean and make strenuous efforts to apologize, face the truth and make sufficient amends to its victims, while cleansing itself of its disgraceful pedophilic behavior. Five years on, and this has clearly not happened.

Paul Stafford,
GEORGE, SOUTH AFRICA

NOT A DROP TO DRINK

RE "WHEN THE TAP RUNS Dry" [Feb. 19]: Reading about the water crisis in Cape Town felt eerily familiar to me. Two years ago I moved from the Indian coastal town of Mangalore, where water shortages worsened each year and severely restricted water availability. Poor planning is the main culprit leading to



these emerging water crises.

Nakul Uppal,
CHHATTISGARH, INDIA

MIGHT AND VULNERABILITY

RE "OUR TROOPS DESERVE Better Than Trump's Idea for a Flashy Parade" [Feb. 19]: I find it disturbing that James Stavridis says, "We don't need a puffy parade to show the world we can fight," and "I'd prefer to see our Department of Defense ... focus on planning for war." These statements coupled with Trump's plans to increase the U.S. nuclear arsenal do not bode well for stability or peace. Wars against nearly defenseless armies around the world seem to have ended in destruction and stalemates—not victories. I pray that an overly confident U.S. is not tempted to attack a power like China or Russia.

John Macassey,
WHITIANGA, NEW ZEALAND

SUPPORT FOR THE SUFFERING

RE "HER MOTHER'S MIND" [Feb. 12]: I could identify very much with photographer Melissa Spitz's comments on the differing reactions to her mother's mental illness and cancer. I had the same experience when I had a mental breakdown and cancer. As a social worker, I've tried to show people how to handle difficult situations like these, including grief. One friend told me of times she saw people change aisles in the supermarket rather than meet her after the death of her sons. As Spitz says, people in these situations deserve our support.

Elsbeth O'Connor,
MOUNT PLEASANT,
AUSTRALIA

SETTING THE RECORD

STRAIGHT ▶ In LightBox (Feb. 19), we misstated the final score of Super Bowl LII. It was 41-33, not 44-31.

TALK TO US

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'YOU'RE GIVING UP A THREE-COURSE MEAL ... FOR THE PROMISE OF A PACKET OF CRISPS IN THE FUTURE.'

MARTIN DONNELLY, a former chief civil servant in Britain's trade department, on the U.K.'s decision to leave the E.U.'s single market as part of Brexit



1,059,646

Total number of seeds in the Global Seed Vault in Svalbard, Norway, after more than 70,000 additional crops were added to the project's storage chambers

'I really believe I'd run in even if I didn't have a weapon.'

DONALD TRUMP, U.S. President, reacting to reports that an armed sheriff's deputy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School did not enter the school during the shooting there on Feb. 14

'There's the fake shot, which is the "Oops"; the fake shot to the backhand, which is the "Oops, I did it"; and then there's the fake shot to the backhand back to the forehand, which is the "Oops, I did it again."

JOCELYNE LAMOUREUX-DAVIDSON, Team USA Hockey's forward, on the strategy behind the shoot-out goal that brought the U.S. its first Olympic women's hockey gold medal since 1998

Blair Witch Project
A TV show based on the horror film is reported to be in the works



Tony Blair
The former U.K. Prime Minister denied reports he sought a Trump Administration job

'Women don't need to find a voice. They have a voice. They need to feel empowered to use it, and people need to be encouraged to listen.'

MEGHAN MARKLE, actor, on the movement to combat workplace sexual harassment, while attending the first Royal Foundation Forum with fiancé Prince Harry

27
Number of degrees Fahrenheit by which average February temps were **hotter than normal** at Greenland's Cape Morris Jesup, the northernmost land-based weather station



\$29 billion

Berkshire Hathaway's **windfall**—part of a \$65.3 billion net gain in 2017—**from recent changes to the U.S. tax code**, according to Warren Buffett's annual letter to investors

'I don't eat rice. I eat quinoa ... It is better than rice.'

NAJIB RAZAK, Prime Minister of Malaysia, in a remark seen as a gaffe because one of the country's signature dishes is the rice-based *nasi lemak*; Razak's statement is the latest setback for his re-election campaign, which has been facing corruption allegations

The Brief

'AS XI HAS CONSOLIDATED POWER AT HOME, HE HAS ALSO BECOME MORE ASSERTIVE ON THE WORLD STAGE.' —NEXT PAGE



Xi cemented his power at the Communist Party Congress in October; now, he wants to hold on to it

WORLD

China steps closer to despotism as Xi becomes leader for life

By Charlie Campbell/
Beijing

THE STATEMENT WAS ONLY 36 words long, but it contained a bombshell that reverberated around the world on Feb. 24: China's ruling Communist Party (CCP) is abolishing the nation's presidential term limit of two five-year periods.

This means President Xi Jinping can now rule the world's most populous nation for as long as he desires, raising fears that the Asian superpower is lurching back to dictatorship. "This is a very significant move toward China transforming into a one-man system," says Jude Blanchette, a Beijing-based researcher on Chinese politics for the Conference Board, a research firm. "It's hard to overemphasize what a big deal this is for the future of China and the world."

For 40 years, the CCP has cloaked

the country's autocratic rule in institutionalization: the party, and not a single person or family, holds the reins of power for the purported benefit of all 1.4 billion Chinese. Strict protocols such as age and term limits helped its legitimacy.

But since becoming President in 2013, Xi has gnawed away at these safeguards while ramping up censorship, locking up lawyers and activists, and garlanding himself in unctuous propaganda. His eponymous political philosophy was enshrined in the constitution last year, when he also neglected to appoint potential successors to China's highest executive body, as protocol required. Scrapping term limits seems like a logical next step.

That one man now rules the world's