

# TIME

## RISING TSAR

How Vladimir Putin  
plans to stay on top

BY MIKHAIL ZYGAR

Why Russia  
keeps on sinking

BY IAN BREMMER



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**#NeverAgain** student leaders (from left) **Emma González, Alex Wind, Cameron Kasky and Jaclyn Corin** at Pasquale's in Coral Springs, Fla., on March 6

Photograph by **Gabriella Demczuk** for **TIME**

**ON THE COVER:** Illustration by **Justin Metz** for **TIME**



**AMERICA'S DRUG CRISIS**

"THE OPIOID DIARIES" [March 5] is the best piece of journalism I've read in a very long time. James Nachtwey has a genius eye, and Paul Moakley's interviews are breathtaking too. As a former editor in chief of a French magazine, I would have been proud to be part of such an amazing editorial tour de force. For the sake of all these poor souls, please follow up.

*Danièle Mazingarbe,*  
PARIS

THIS ISSUE BLEW ME AWAY. No entertainment fluff. No distracting advertisements. I was very impressed that you were willing to forgo your advertising revenue in order to express your concern for our people and our country. Even though I'm not aware of knowing anyone who uses opioids, I was deeply moved. I'm sure that for those who have family or friends with this problem, your issue struck a much deeper chord. I have a new respect for your journalistic integrity.

*Kent Marmet,*  
CONCORD, CALIF.

WHILE I APPLAUD YOUR INTENTION to shed light on the opioid epidemic, I was disappointed by the graphic and sensationalized photographs. They instill a sense of urgency, but they also increase stigma, portraying addicts

at their absolute worst. Why show so many people shooting up? Why not show people in recovery, images that encourage people to believe hope is not lost? The story of recovery is an equally important one to tell because it gives hope that there is something on the other side of despair. It is only when someone feels supported, when someone has faith that it is possible to achieve a life beyond using, that they will let go of the drug. It's a shame that these pictures don't tell that story. Please do a second volume: "The Opioid Diaries Part 2: Life in Recovery."

*Deborah Neubauer,*  
AMHERST, MASS.

IS THIS DONALD TRUMP'S "great" America? The American people who never fail to remind the rest of the world how great they are, brought to their knees by Big Pharma and doctors. The biggest winners in this awful reality are the pharmaceutical companies and the doctors who prescribe these substances. Why don't doctors instead offer advice on the benefits of yoga and meditation, both of which have calming effects? Because there is no big money to be made on the miseries of the vulnerable in yoga and meditation as there is in prescribing opioids. Unless doctors and Big Pharma are fixed, these addicts will continue

down the road to perdition.  
*Asha Chatelot,*  
PONTOISE, FRANCE

FOR A LONG TIME, I'VE SUBSCRIBED to an international magazine to keep informed about events in the world. This issue is dedicated to a very specific phenomenon and its consequences in the U.S. solely. I find this scandalous. All the space occupied by huge photographs and quotations could have been better put to use by reporting.

*Nicole-Jeanne Froemer,*  
HAAN, GERMANY

AMERICANS ARE STRANGE people. On the one hand, some understand that drug addiction is an evil that must be cured. But on the other hand, one state after another legalizes marijuana. Even though it is believed to be the least dangerous among drugs, using it is often the first step

into the world of addiction.  
*Andrzej Krasinski,*  
WARSAW

I USED TO WORK FOR A PSYCHIATRIC hospital, and I've seen a lot. So I take issue with your statement that "the opioid epidemic must be seen as a public-health crisis rather than a moral failure." Think of how much more effective our crusade against this epidemic would be if we treated both the body and the soul. When people lose the moral basis of life, they lose hope, they lose faith, meaning and purpose. And emptiness and meaninglessness have everything to do with opioid addiction.

*Vladimir Mladenov,*  
LONDON

**SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT** ▶ In "Inside the Racing Mind of the Best Skier on Earth" (Feb. 12), we misspelled the name of Mikaela Shiffrin's best friend. She is Bug Pech.

**TALK TO US**

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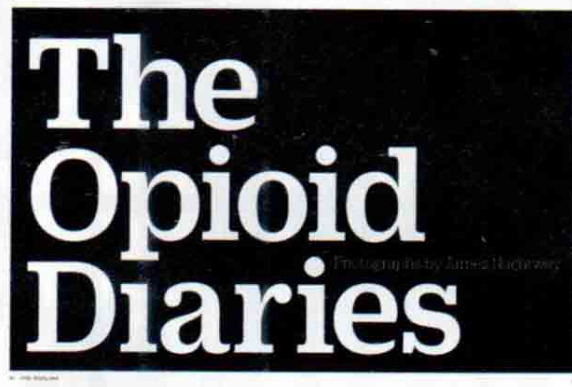
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**'If we don't get tough on the drug dealers, we are wasting our time ... That toughness includes the death penalty.'**

**DONALD TRUMP,**  
U.S. President, calling for harsher sentences for opioid dealers in a speech in New Hampshire, one of the states hardest hit by the opioid epidemic

**\$3,700**

**Fine faced by a French baker who kept his shop open every day in defiance of a law that requires bakeries to close for at least one day of rest each week**

**'I've seen no evidence of collusion, but to stop the investigation without cause, I think, would be a constitutional crisis.'**

**LINDSEY GRAHAM,**  
Republican U.S. Senator from South Carolina, arguing that it might be an impeachable offense if President Trump fired special counsel Robert Mueller in the midst of the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election

**'WE ARE ALL HUMAN BEINGS AND THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.'**

**MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN,**  
Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, when asked whether women are equal to men during an interview on CBS's *60 Minutes*

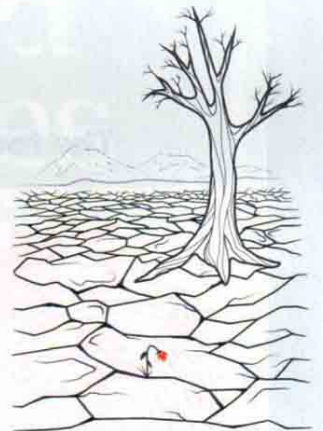
**'They cried right there in aisle 23.'**

**MAGGIE GREMMINGER,**  
30, who sat behind the owner of a French bulldog that died on United Flight 1284 on March 12 after a flight attendant put it in the overhead compartment. United apologized, and said it will now issue brightly colored tags for pet carriers; after two other incidents involving dogs ending up at the wrong destination, the airline is also suspending reservations for pets traveling in cargo



**'I'll be wearing it at breakfast.'**

**RINGO STARR,**  
Beatles drummer, on the medal he received when Prince William knighted him



**60%**

**Percentage of plants in the world's richest forests that are at risk of extinction in the next century unless stronger measures to combat climate change are implemented, according to a landmark study published in the journal *Climate Change***

**GENES**  
NASA had to clear up confusion over a study on changes to astronaut Scott Kelly's DNA



**JEANS**  
The brand Mother keeps selling out of denim pants popularized by Meghan Markle



# The Brief Opener

POLITICS

## Trump recasts for risky 'Season 2'

By Philip Elliott

**I**T WAS EARLY MARCH, AND PRESIDENT DONALD Trump had a dramatic plan: impose a new round of import tariffs on America's largest trading partner, China. But in meeting after meeting, his aides warned just how costly the move could be. It would hurt U.S. workers and slice into the stock market, they said. It didn't have the backing of fellow Republicans. It would be bad politics for a party facing tough odds in November's elections. They reminded him that the global aluminum and steel tariffs he imposed earlier in the month had led European allies to prepare retaliatory moves and had prompted the White House's chief economic adviser to resign. Who knew what unintended consequences this new plan might unleash?

The President nodded along, now and then mumbling an O.K., and the White House aides thought they had prevailed. But in the middle of the month, they were summoned to hear from the President again: he wanted \$30 billion in tariffs on Chinese products. Hours later, the staffers read that Trump had doubled the figure to \$60 billion.

**The mix of high-impact policy moves and high-profile personnel changes is taking its toll**

Welcome to Season 2 of the Trump Show, to borrow a phrase from one of his veteran aides. Fed up with experts and advisers and increasingly comfortable in the job, Trump is determined to do things his way. "The President feels he's got this now," says one White House official, who does not share his confidence.

The impact of an emboldened Trump goes well beyond a possible trade war. On March 13, Trump fired Secretary of State Rex Tillerson with a tweet, replacing him with hard-line CIA chief Mike Pompeo. Three days later, his goading helped drive Attorney General Jeff Sessions to fire FBI deputy director Andrew McCabe, who previously oversaw the bureau's investigations into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia. Trump's subsequent tweets attacking Robert Mueller by name for the first time raised fears the President might fire the special counsel and trigger a constitutional crisis.

Inside the White House, the mix of high-impact policy moves and high-profile personnel changes is taking its toll. Conversations with more than two dozen current and former Administration officials during the past month reveal a White House in the grip of anxiety as staffers fear the next email or phone call could bring word they're being fired too. Some have taken to asking reporters about rumored staff changes, suspecting journalists will know before those running the government. More worrying:

THE DEPARTED: CASUALTIES OF THE PRESIDENT'S SHAKE-UPS



Trump's own aides fear the fallout for the country and the world that may result as he tests the limits of the power of the presidency.

**TRUMP HAS ALWAYS PREFERRED** a chaotic workplace. But his confidence in the Oval Office is new. When he won the White House—back when no one in his orbit had pleaded guilty, Mueller was at a white-shoe law firm and liberals still blamed then-FBI Director James Comey for Hillary Clinton's loss—Trump decided he needed some experience around him. He had been a successful businessman, but as the head of a privately held real estate empire, he'd never suffered a board of directors or oversight of stockholders. Moreover, he knew he was the first Commander in Chief not to have previously served in government or the military. So Trump hired a flight of experienced Washington hands to help guide him. They were the guardrails of his presidency.

And Trump hated it. These men—and they were largely men—told him, often in charts and pictures, why his preferred actions were dangerous. Sometimes they were right. But in recent weeks, Trump has focused more on decisions where their dire predictions haven't come true, aides say. They told him that moving the