

Wind of change in Europe

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

THE Republic of Ireland has for long been led by the largest centre-right party called Fine Gael. Following the retirement of Enda Kenny from the ruling party it nominated a new leader in the person of Leo Varadkar on June 7. He was chosen as the best man for the job regardless of his racial origins. His parents are Ashok Varadkar and Miriam Varadkar. He is of Indian heritage with evidently minority ethnic origins which are now being subsumed in a greater Irish identity. Varadkar has been nominated as Taoiseach, an Irish word meaning the "leader" which is used as title of prime minister of the Republic of Ireland. He is poised to be the ROI's head of government—his nomination having been endorsed by President Michael D Higgins. Only 38, and as young as French president Emmanuel Macron, the Irish leader of immigrant origin may have a long bright political future ahead of him.



Leo Varadkar wins the Fine Gael parliamentary elections to replace Prime Minister of Ireland (Taoiseach) Enda Kenny as leader of the party, in Dublin, Ireland June 2, 2017.

PHOTO: REUTERS/CLODAGH KILCOYNE

from young voters. That the Trump syndrome would fail to cross the Atlantic was powerfully demonstrated through staunch pro-right Le Pen's electoral disaster. Earlier in the Austrian presidential

election in May, far-right leader Norbert Hoffer had conceded defeat to Alexander van Bellen. The polarising election in Austria after Brexit and US presidential election ended on repudiation of the far-right. A positive message rang out across

Europe marking what many believed as an antidote to the ultra-nationalist spectre. Look at Britain. The dogmatic UKIP, once led by Trump's darling boy in the UK Nigel Farage but now being headed by Paul Nuttall, drew a

blank in the June snap general election. The party of the man Farage which aggressively campaigned for Brexit and saw a referendum held on it going in its favour has no presence in the House of Commons. What a tragic turn of fate within such a short time! Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has been elected to the hung parliament with a decisive party strength vis-à-vis the conservative government of Theresa May. While Corbyn's support base lies firmly with 18 to 25-year-old voters (reminds me of Democrat Bernie Sanders' popularity with young generation American voters) Theresa May has to latch onto the older generation electoral base. Not only is her proposed silver brigade health insurance premium being objected to by targeted beneficiaries Tory grandee Michael Heseltine has pointed to an inner demographic deficiency. Older generation Conservative supporters are passing away at the rate of two percent per annum tasking the party to launch a replacement campaign to transfuse fresh blood into it. The British government is committed to resolving issues of EU nationals in the UK and of UK nationals in the EU. A fine balance has to be worked out in implementing Brexit so that both categories of nationals do not become pawns on the dice of financial arrangements. We, as member of the Commonwealth as well as

beneficiary of the EU, may press for a statement of a positive policy on other immigrants seeking entry to the EU and UK. Jeremy Corbyn, the triumphant Labour leader whose party has traditionally been more liberal on the immigrant issue than the Conservatives, could have a positive say in the matter. Turn to Grenfell Tower fire disaster which killed at least 79 people. Majority of them were foreigners including Bangladeshis. The wave of national support for the victims put across a resounding signal of unity behind the cause of securing lives in community building blocks. Concerts were arranged with American artistes participating to foster community togetherness aimed at preventing a recurrence. There is now compunction for not having paid the attention due to such building blocks. In fact Prime Minister Theresa May has opened a super cell to entertain and address grievances brought up to it by people living in community blocks. Ministers have proposed discussion in the parliament on the issue from time to time so that it does not get kicked into the tall grass. All this means two things. First, small people's voice is becoming heard and second, decent-minded souls far outnumber the hateful lot. The silent majority must speak up and take charge. The writer is an analyst of current affairs and former Associate Editor, The Daily Star. E-mail: shahhusainimam@gmail.com

PROJECT SYNDICATE

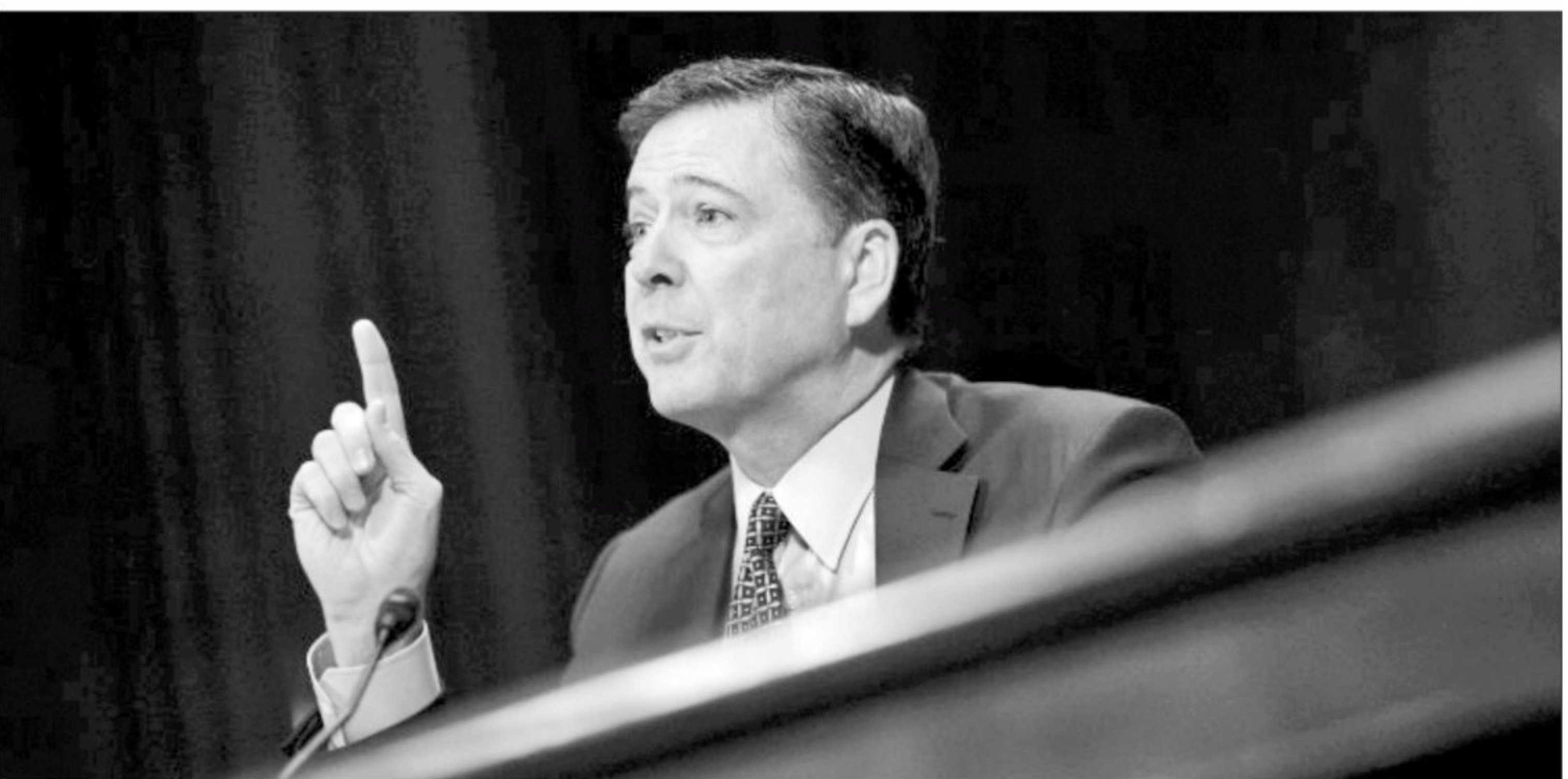
The Russian-Roulette Presidency



ELIZABETH DREW

UNLESS US President Donald Trump decides that he has had enough, and returns to his gilded Manhattan tower, his presidency's metastasising crisis will continue to haunt him. Investigations in the United States Senate and House of Representatives are underway, and the most serious inquiry is being conducted by a special counsel, Robert Mueller, who is hiring a fearsome team of specialists in criminal law. Investigators are looking into what Russia did to try to tip the 2016 US presidential election in Trump's favour, and whether Trump's campaign colluded with Russian officials in that effort. The congressional inquiries are also supposed to recommend ways to prevent foreign powers from interfering in future elections, especially after recent reports suggesting that Russia's meddling was even more ambitious than was previously known. In a sign of where the special counsel's investigation may be headed, Mueller, a former FBI director known for his thoroughness, recently hired a specialist in financial misconduct. US banks will not lend to Trump, owing to his private company's long history of not repaying debts, including those from an ill-fated plunge into Atlantic City casinos in the 1990s. So he's had to find other sources of financing. His most recent lender, Deutsche Bank, was charged earlier this year for laundering money on behalf of Russian entities. Trump's jumpiness whenever the Russia question comes up has only added to suspicions that he may have something to hide. It has also led him to make a series of mistakes. For example, in what was apparently a rare instance of truth telling, Trump revealed to NBC News's Lester Holt that he had fired FBI Director James Comey because of "this Russia thing." With that single statement, he gave the lie to the official story recited by Vice President Mike Pence and various White House aides: that Comey

had been fired for mishandling the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server. This is far from the only time Trump has undermined his own people. He is accustomed to running his own business, and is oblivious to the rules of Washington. He often gets himself in trouble through ill-advised tweets, but so far no one has been able to persuade him to tone down his use of social media. By firing Comey, Trump landed himself in even more serious trouble. The dismissal not only led to the hiring of a special counsel with the power to investigate crimes related to the 2016 election, but also could contribute to a charge of obstruction of justice against Trump. An obstruction charge could be reinforced by Comey's allegations that Trump had said privately that he "hoped" the FBI would stop investigating Trump's former national security adviser Michael Flynn. When Comey balked, Trump reportedly asked the heads of two other intelligence agencies to announce publicly that there had been no collusion between his campaign and Russia, a move that could provide further legal grounds to charge Trump with engaging in a pattern of obstruction. More recently, a Trump confidante told an interviewer that Trump was considering firing Mueller as well. Technically, that decision must come from Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who has said that he sees no cause for firing Mueller. If Trump were to force the issue, perhaps firing both Rosenstein and Mueller, the ensuing political eruption would make the outcry at Comey's firing seem like a small squeak by comparison. Rosenstein has jurisdiction over Mueller's investigation because Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the first Republican senator to endorse Trump in the 2016 campaign, has recused himself from matters related to the campaign and Russia. Sessions is one of several Trump advisers who "forgot" that they met with Russian officials during the presidential campaign or post-election transition. Another forgetful adviser is Trump's son-in-



Then-Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation James Comey testifies in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee during an oversight hearing on the FBI on Capitol Hill May 3, 2017 in Washington, DC.

PHOTO: ERIC THAYER/GETTY IMAGES/AFP

law, Jared Kushner, who failed to disclose meetings with key Russians on his security-clearance form. Kushner has a preposterous portfolio of assignments, and is clearly in over his head. Having been named a "person of interest" in the FBI's Russia investigation, Kushner's growing problems could eventually spill over to affect his father-in-law. While running his own father's real-estate business, Kushner overpaid for a prime property in New York City (666 Fifth Avenue), and has been trying to raise cash to pay off the existing debt on it. Investigators are now attempting to determine whether this was why he met in December meeting (during the transition) with Sergey Gorkov — the head of Russia's Vnesheconombank and a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin. A special counsel can investigate only crimes that are on the books. But there are other acts that could amount to impeachable offenses — as described by America's

founders — such as treason, bribery, "and other high crimes and misdemeanors," with the term "high crimes" having been taken to mean something beyond the items in the criminal code. In the case of former President Richard Nixon, the most significant article of impeachment adopted by the House Judiciary Committee stipulated that the president could be held accountable for his subordinates' actions. So, even if Trump's fingerprints are not found on the matters the special counsel is investigating, he could still be found responsible for a pattern of misdeeds committed by his associates. It's widely considered very unlikely that the Republican-controlled Congress — or even the Congress following the 2018 midterm elections, in which the Democrats could retake the House — would move to impeach Trump. Despite the sense that Republicans would try to

oust him before his four years are up, if they feel that he is causing them too much political trouble, they have shown no such inclination so far. Trump could also be removed from power by a complicated process, spelled out in the 25th Amendment to the US Constitution, in which he's deemed unfit to serve. But that process has never been used, and it's not clear how well it would work. Nonetheless, it has come up among elected politicians worried about Trump's fitness. As for Trump himself, his gilded tower in Manhattan will always be beckoning him. The writer is a regular contributor to The New York Review of Books and the author, most recently, of Washington Journal: Reporting Watergate and Richard Nixon's Downfall. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2017. www.project-syndicate.org (Exclusive to The Daily Star)

A WORD A DAY

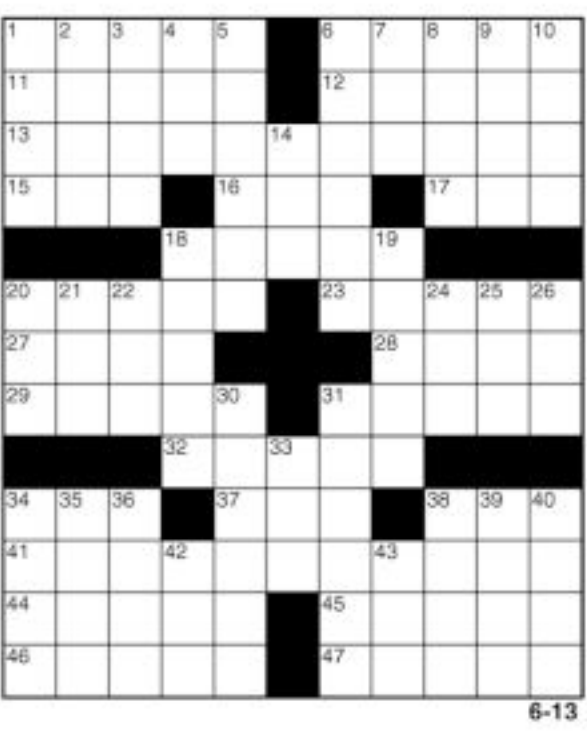


PHOSPHENE
noun

The light and colours produced by pressure on the eyes or direct stimulation of the visual system other than by light.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ACROSS | 34 Paris pal | 10 To-do item |
| 1 English homework list, for short | 37 Designer Claiborne | 14 First numero |
| 6 Belt setting | 38 Conk out | 18 Pricey |
| 11 Furious | 41 Paul Mc-Cartney and Sting | 19 Comic strip unit |
| 12 Mumbai's nation | 44 Pancake's cousin | 20 Skirt edge |
| 13 Ones trying to get home | 45 Fable fellow | 21 Historic stretch |
| 15 Caribou's kin | 46 Place | 22 In shape |
| 16 Terminus | 47 Like monsoon season | 24 Used a spade |
| 17 Inquire | | 25 Luau instrument |
| 18 Small porch | | 26 Parrot or puppy |
| 20 Tests the weight of | DOWN | 30 Barked sharply |
| 23 Crumple into a ball | 1 Unspoken felling | 31 Exotic shopping site |
| 27 Buffalo's lake | 2 Spoken | 33 Goose egg |
| 28 Zap in a microwave (SL) | 3 Wine barrle | 34 Basics |
| 29 Pirate address | 4 Brunched | 35 Shopping site |
| 31 Sire | 5 French caps | 36 "Got it" |
| 32 Prison-related | 6 Aisle Alternative | 38 Lucy's costar |
| | 7 Curry on TV | 39 Steel ingredient |
| | 8 Concept | 40 Spot |
| | 9 Baronets' titles | 42 Relaxing resort |
| | | 43 Pro vote |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER
LESS CARP
DALAI AGAIN
ATOLL RODEO
TOPEKA IRS
EYES TENURE
SAD CLAUSE
COAST
JOHNNY HAT
PURIST PORE
END AUSTIN
REEVE RATSO
MARIA SLIER
USER AMEN

BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES

by Kirkman & Scott

