

Russia Shows Open Support For Maduro With 2 Planes

By ANATOLY KURMANAEV

CARACAS, Venezuela — A visit to Venezuela by two military airplanes from Russia, which landed in broad daylight at the international airport in Caracas, has set off alarms that the Kremlin might be acting more brazenly to protect President Nicolás Maduro from the uprising against him.

Russian and Venezuelan officials have not disputed the arrival of the airplanes, which were first seen at the airport on Saturday. Such flights would ordinarily be sent to a protected military air base beyond the sight of the public.

The planes brought supplies and technical advisers to Caracas, Venezuela's capital, according to a Russian state news agency and a Russian diplomat. The visit was related to military cooperation contracts signed years ago between Russia and Venezuela, said the news agency, Ria Novosti, suggesting it was routine.

A Russian diplomat in Caracas, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the diplomat was not authorized to speak to the media, confirmed the Ria Novosti account and said there was nothing unusual.

But opposition members said the visibility of the military planes was unusual and had been meant to send a message. The timing showed that both Russian and Venezuelan officials wanted to convert a routine technical stop into a show of strength, said Rocio San Miguel, a Venezuelan security analyst.

"They want to make it as visible as possible," said Ms. San Miguel. "This is a sort of bluff in a stra-

Landing military planes in Caracas adds to tension.

tically important moment for Maduro."

Russia has emerged as Mr. Maduro's main backer since opposition leader Juan Guaidó proclaimed himself interim president in late January with support of the United States and about 50 other states.

Russia has maintenance contracts for weapons sold to Venezuela under late President Hugo Chávez, including air defense systems, fighter jets and tanks, that are worth billions of dollars.

Flight tracking websites showed an Ilyushin IL-62 jet and an Antonov AN-124 cargo plane flew from Moscow's military airport to Caracas's international airport via Syria. The cargo plane flew back to Syria on Monday, according to flight tracking website bosporusobserver.com.

The arrival of the advisers came as Venezuela activated Russian-made S300 air defense systems last week, according to satellite imagery analysis firm ImageSat Intl. Russia has also recently deployed the S300 in Syria.

Members of Venezuela's opposition have accused Mr. Maduro of escalating the country's deepening political crisis. They have pointed to widespread irregularities during the last election, consider Mr. Maduro's government illegitimate and have asked him to step down and to allow them to call new elections.

President Trump has repeatedly said that all options are on the table to remove Mr. Maduro, not ruling out military intervention.

State Secretary Michael Pompeo told his Russian counterpart in a phone call Monday that the United States will "not stand idly by as Russia exacerbates tensions in Venezuela."

Last week, Venezuelan secret police detained Mr. Guaidó's chief of staff on terrorism charges, a move that the Trump administration

As Opioid Crisis Rages, Art Powerhouses Shun Sackler Family

By ALEX MARSHALL

In London this weekend, visitors to the Old Royal Naval College headed to its reopened "painted hall," an ornate masterpiece called Britain's answer to the Sistine Chapel, and then went to the Sackler Gallery to learn its story.

In Paris, at the Louvre, lovers of Persian art knew there was only one place to go: the Sackler Wing of Oriental Antiquities. Want to find the long line for the Temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan Museum of Art? Head for the soaring, glass-walled Sackler Wing.

For decades, the Sackler family has generously supported museums worldwide, not to mention numerous medical and educational institutions including Columbia University, where there is a Sackler Institute, and Oxford, where there is a Sackler Library.

But now some favorite Sackler charities are reconsidering whether they want the money at all, and several have already rejected any future gifts, concluding that some family members' ties to the opioid crisis outweighed the benefits of their six- and sometimes seven-figure checks.

In a remarkable rebuke to one of the world's most prominent philanthropic dynasties, the prestigious Tate museums in London and the Solomon R. Guggenheim in New York, where a Sackler sat on the board for many years, decided in the last week that they would no longer accept gifts from their longtime Sackler benefactors. Britain's National Portrait Gallery announced it had jointly decided with the Sackler Trust to cancel a planned \$1.3 million donation, and an article in The Art Newspaper disclosed that a museum in South London had returned a family donation last year.

The Tate's statement noted the family's "historic philanthropy," then added: "However, in the present circumstances we do not think it right to seek or accept further donations from the Sacklers."

Other Sackler beneficiaries, including the Metropolitan Museum and the New York Academy of Science, are reviewing their donation policies as a result of publicity and legal actions surrounding the family and its company, Purdue Pharma, the maker of the groundbreaking, enormously profitable and frequently-abused painkiller OxyContin. Tufts University, which has a Sackler graduate school, announced on Monday that it had hired a former top federal prosecutor for Massachusetts to look into the university's relationship with the family.

On Monday, as the embarrassment grew with every new announcement, a Sackler trust and a family foundation in Britain issued statements saying they would suspend further philanthropy for the moment.

"The current press attention that these legal cases in the United States is generating has created immense pressure on the scientific, medical, educational and arts institutions here in the U.K., large and small, that I am so proud to support," Theresa Sackler, the chair of the Sackler Trust, said in a statement. "This attention is distracting them from the important work that they do."

While the drug's potential for abuse has been known for two decades, only recently has Purdue's controlling family come under intense scrutiny. Their role in marketing the drug, despite its perils, was the focus of articles in The New Yorker and Esquire in 2017.

Documents submitted in court this year in a lawsuit suggested that, far from being bystanders to the epidemic, family members directed company efforts to mislead the public and doctors about the dangers of abusing OxyContin. The Sacklers have denied the allegations, and on Monday, a spokesman for family members in the United States said in a statement: "While plaintiffs' court filings have created an erroneous picture and resulted in unwarranted criti-



A protest at the Guggenheim Museum in New York over Sackler donations. The museum no longer accepts gifts from the family.

cism, we remain committed to playing a substantive role in addressing this complex public health crisis. Our hearts go out to those affected by drug abuse or addiction."

The shunning of the family has also gone beyond the cultural world. The Wall Street Journal reported this month that a hedge fund, Hildene Capital Management, told the Sacklers last year it would no longer manage their money. Brett Jefferson, Hildene's president, told the newspaper that "an opioid-related tragedy affected someone with a personal relationship to me and other members of Hildene."

But for museums and other nonprofits, rejecting a regular patron is a far more momentous step, given their reliance on big donations. Alice Bell, the communications director of 10:10 Climate Action, a London-based charity, said that cutting ties with Sackler donors last year meant a 40 percent hit to its budget.

"There certainly were cuts," Ms. Bell said. The charity felt it had made the correct decision, but nonetheless, she said, "it's been frustrating to see ideas we could

have started to work up into real world action stuck as sketches on our computers."

The two Sackler organizations in Britain that announced a suspension on Monday gave out almost \$160 million from 2012 to 2017 alone, according to charity records. A handful of Sackler foundations in the United States have

Cutting ties with a clan known for its generous gifts and its drug holdings.

given away tens of millions over the past two decades, and the family's giving goes back even farther, long before OxyContin was created, a point some institutions have raised in defending decisions not to strip the Sackler name from wings or buildings.

The scrutiny of the Sacklers comes amid a broader reckoning in the museum world about who sits on their boards and bankrolls their programs. Adrian Ellis, di-

rector of AEA Consulting, which works with nonprofits in the United States, Britain and elsewhere, said that the rejections of Sackler money would put pressure on other museums to state what funding they will and will not accept.

In Britain, there have been campaigns against the oil company BP's sponsorship of exhibitions, while in New York, there have been protests against the Whitney Museum because its vice chairman, Warren Kanders, runs a company that manufactures tear gas that was used to repel migrants trying to cross into the United States from Mexico.

Notably, museums in Britain have been faster to distance themselves from members of the Sackler family than their counterparts in the United States, where opioid drugs including OxyContin are prescribed far more often and the crisis has been far more devastating, claiming more than 200,000 lives over the last two decades from overdoses.

Some American institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum and Columbia, said they had reviewed, or were reviewing, their

policies in light of the allegations against Sackler family members but have not stated they would reject their gifts in the future. They have re-evaluated acceptances from the Sackler family philanthropies and are not taking gifts from them" at present, Scott Schell, a spokesman for Columbia, declining to elaborate. A spokesman for the Metropolitan Opera, which has received at least \$1 million from the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Fund for Arts & Sciences, said "there are significant contributions recently being made to the Metropolitan Opera by any member of the Sackler family or their foundations."

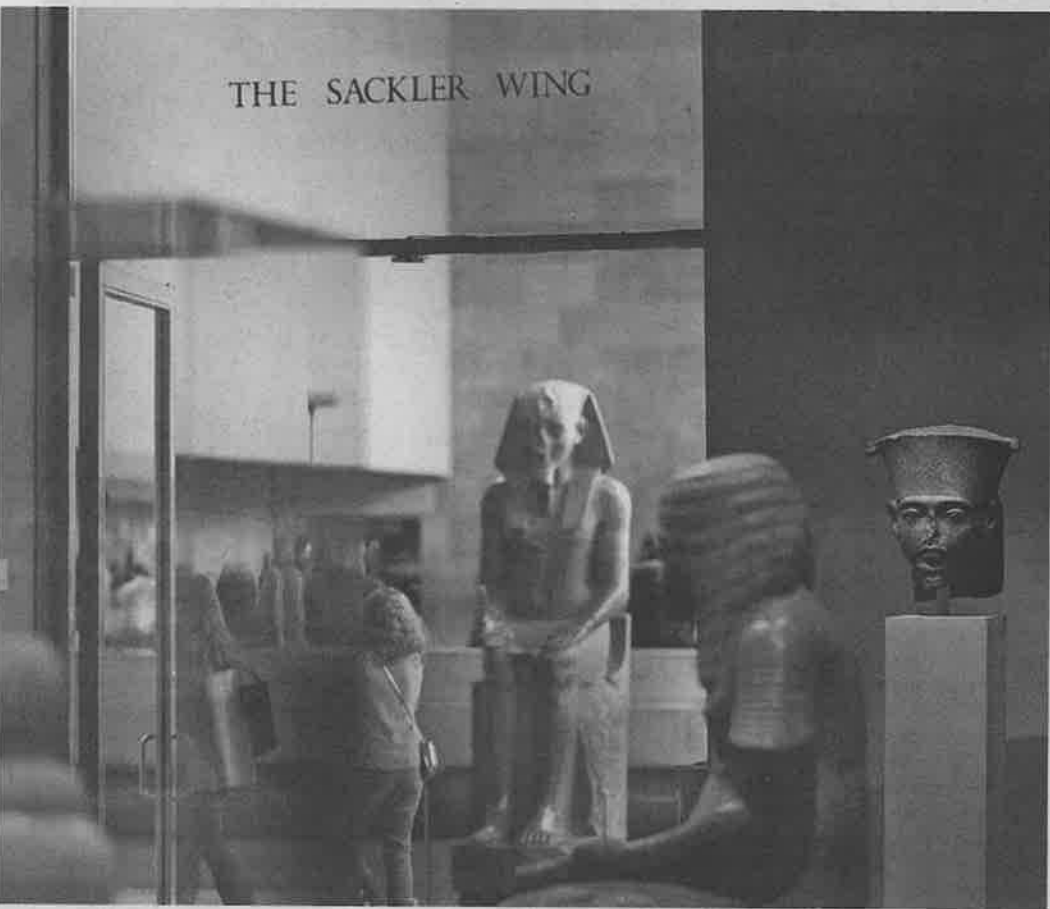
The Dia Art Foundation and the American Museum of Natural History, which together have received millions from foundations tied to Raymond's brother Mortimer Sackler, did not respond to requests for comment. (The brother who founded the company, Arthur Sackler, died before OxyContin was created and his share was bought out by his brothers, a point often raised by museums that have received money from Arthur or his heirs.)

The Guggenheim's move, perhaps the most surprising, is not just because it was the American institution known most closely with its Sackler support.

Mortimer D.A. Sackler, a son of Mortimer Sackler, sat on the Guggenheim's board for nearly 40 years and the family gave the museum \$9 million between 1991 and 2015, including \$7 million to establish and support the Sackler Center for Arts Education.

The Guggenheim and the Metropolitan Museum had been the scene of protests related to the Sacklers. One last month, led by the photographer Nan Goldin, who overcame an OxyContin addiction, involved dropping thousands of slips of white paper from the iconic gallery spiral into the atrium, a reference to a court decision that quoted Richard Sackler, who ran Purdue Pharma, as having a "blizzard of prescriptions that will bury the competition."

Last Thursday, the Guggenheim, like other American museums, stated simply that "no additional gifts are planned." But a day later, amid more news about British museums rejecting Sackler money, the Guggenheim amended its



The Sackler wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The family, which owned Purdue

Elizabeth A. Harris contributed re-

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