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THE WEATHER
Today, heavy rain, high 67. **Tonight,** mostly cloudy and dry, low 57. **Tomorrow,** a mix of clouds and sunshine with a few afternoon showers, high 65. Weather map, Page B12.

VOL. CLXXVI .... No. 61,060 © 2026 The New York Times Company FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2026 Prices in Canada may be higher $4.00

Trump Team Saw Collapse Coming Days Before the Vote



Unpopularity of War and President Was Too Much to Overcome

This article is by ***Shane Goldmacher****,* ***Jonathan Swan*** *and* ***Maggie Haberman****.*

Six days before the election, more than two dozen of President Trump's top strategists logged onto a private video call.

The mood was grim. The discussion began with talk of cyanide.

"Do you want the white pill first, or the black pill first?" asked Tony Fabrizio, the president's chief pollster.

Tim Saler, one of the Republican Party's top data consultants, laid out two scenarios. In the first, the $400 million MAGA Inc. super PAC was reaching the voters that it had wanted and expected to vote. "That's the optimistic scenario," he said.

The other was a wipeout.

"I'm getting my affairs in order,"

on fleeing the country.

"At least Bibi won. He'll protect us," Mr. Blair said sarcastically of the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, whose country had voted the day before. (Mr. Netanyahu's bloc fell short of a majority, and his party soon claimed the election had been stolen.)

"Maybe we could get asylum in Israel," Mr. Fabrizio said.

The scope of the Republican wreckage would become clear a week later.

Democrats stormed to a huge House majority and won control of the Senate, a remarkable feat powered by victories in Republican strongholds — Kansas, South Carolina, Texas — that few could have imagined a year ago.

This account of the Republican Party's collapse is based on interviews with more than 70 people —


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Glacier Bay
GUSTAVUS
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ALASKA SEAPLANES

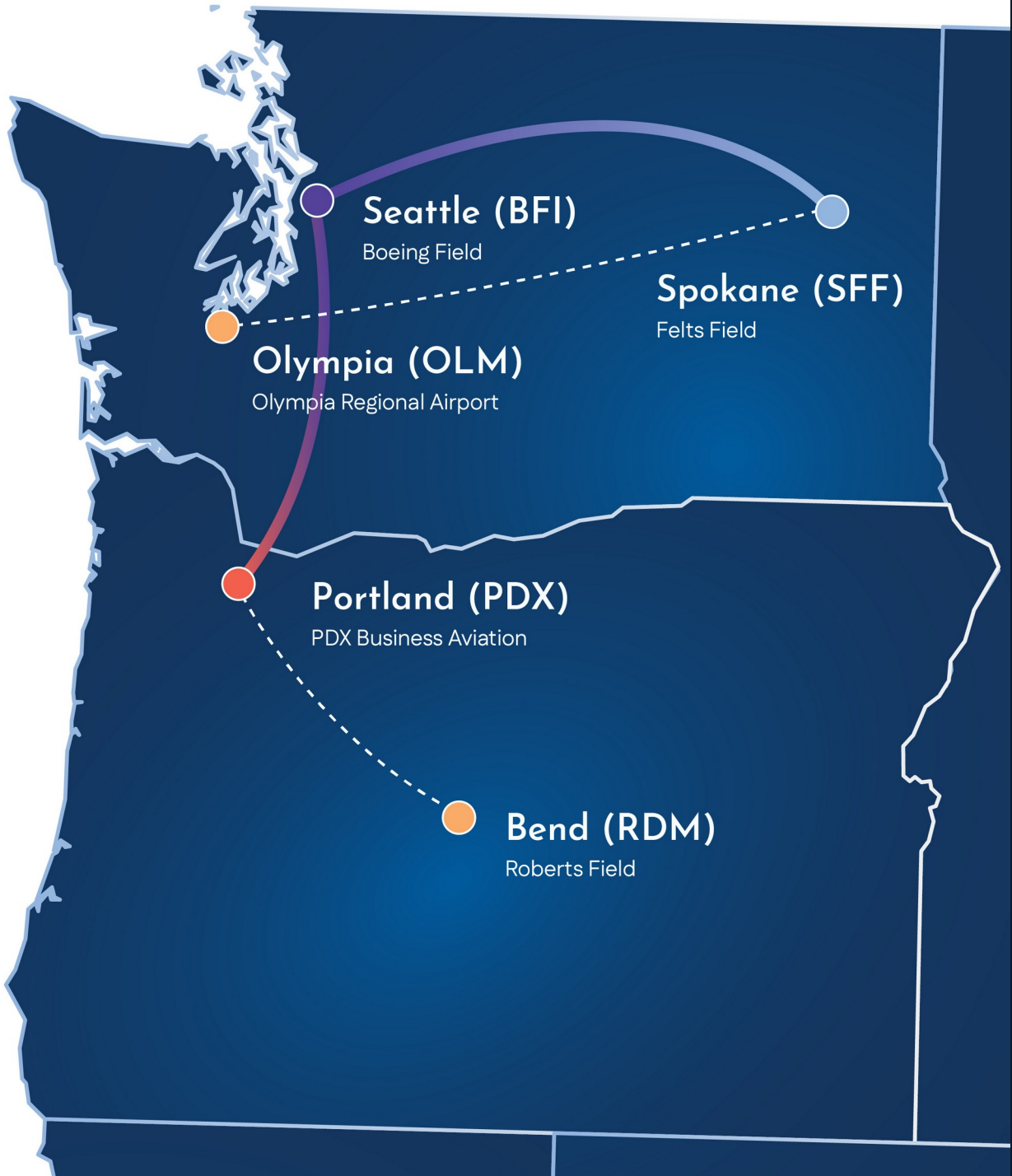

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