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The Homeland Security News Briefing

TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2017 5:00 AM EST

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Leading DHS News:

ADMINISTRATION FLOATS MEXICO IMPORT TAX AS PEÑA NIETO CANCELS MEETING WITH TRUMP. Coverage of the US-Mexico border wall debate focuses on the Administration’s floating of a 20 percent import tax and on Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto’s cancellation of his scheduled meeting with President Trump, with the President’s own remarks on the wall at the Republican retreat in Philadelphia getting less attention. The coverage remains mostly negative, with many reports stating that an import tax would put the cost burden on Americans, not on Mexico.

ABC World News Tonight (1/26, lead story, 4:10, Muir, 14.63M) opened with “the showdown over the wall. President Trump telling us just 24 hours ago that Americans will pay at first, but Mexico will pay us back. Tonight, the Mexican president saying that won’t happen. And there is new fallout: President Peña Nieto’s visit to the White House next week, now canceled.” ABC’s Jonathan Karl: “Mexico may insist it’s not going to happen, but today Donald Trump was as defiant as ever.” Trump: “I’ve said many times that the American people will not pay for the wall. And I have made that clear to the government of Mexico.” During an interview with Fox News’ Hannity (1/26, 535K), the President said, “The wall is necessary. It’s not just politics.”

The CBS Evening News (1/26, lead story, 2:45, Pelley, 11.17M) reported, “It’s become a chaotic first week for the Trump Administration. Late today, the President’s press secretary told reporters that Mr. Trump never said the Mexican government would pay for the wall. Earlier, he announced a 20 percent tax on Mexican goods, and then the White House arranged a hasty news conference to knock that down. This morning, Mr. Trump insulted the president of Mexico with a tweet, and now their summit meeting in Washington is off.”

NBC Nightly News (1/26, lead story, 3:00, Holt, 16.61M) reported, “President Trump’s plan to build a wall on the Mexican border is potentially running up against its own walls as he looks for ways to pay for it that don’t leave Americans on the hook. The President’s insistence that Mexico will foot the bill has now antagonized the Mexican president to the point of calling off next week’s scheduled face-to-face meeting.” NBC’s Hallie Jackson: “Late this afternoon, the Administration floating an idea to slap a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports – a way to fund the estimated $8 billion to $14 billion wall, but under that plan it would be Americans who would probably end up paying more for imports like cars, fruits and vegetables, and alcohol. In effect, footing the bill themselves.”

Fox News Special Report (1/26, 1.53M) said, “It only took four days of his first official working week but...Trump is already deeply embroiled in his very first diplomatic spat.” CNN’s Situation Room (1/26, 554K) reported that “some top Republicans are growing increasingly concerned about the President’s policies towards Mexico,” including the “recent proposal by the White House to impose a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports.”

The AP (1/26, Pace) reports that Trump, speaking at a Republican retreat in Philadelphia, called on the GOP “to help him enact ‘great and lasting change’...at a party retreat Thursday but offered few details. Later his spokesman said the president will seek a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports to pay for a proposed border wall.” Bloomberg Politics (1/26, Sink, 201K) reports that Sean Spicer told reporters, “When you look at the plan that’s taking shape now, using comprehensive tax reform as a means to tax imports from countries that we have a trade deficit from, like Mexico, if you tax that $50 billion at 20 percent of imports, by doing that we can do $10 billion a year and easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone.” However, the AP says Spicer later “tried to take back his earlier comments by saying the 20 percent tax is one of several options under consideration and Trump hasn’t settled on it as the way to recoup construction costs for building the wall.”

The Hill (1/26, Fabian, 1.25M) also says Spicer “sought to clarify his earlier comments about the plan, saying they were not meant to be an official policy rollout.” He said, “Our job right now isn’t to roll

something out or be prescriptive. It's to show that there are ways that the wall could be paid for. Full stop. That's it." Politico (1/26, Nussbaum, 2.46M) headlines a report "Trump Team Walks Back Plan To Fund Wall With Import Tax."

The Los Angeles Times (1/26, Memoli, 4.52M) says that "although Trump repeatedly has said that Mexico would pay for the wall," such a tax "actually would fall on U.S. consumers, not on Mexicans." USA Today (1/26, Korte, Jackson, 5.28M) says Spicer "gave few details, and described it as a beginning of a process that would be part of overall tax reform." The Washington Post (1/26, Partlow, Rucker, 11.43M) calls the tax proposal "a stunning new detail," and says Trump's moves "have rekindled old resentments in Mexico, a country that during its history has often felt bullied and threatened by its wealthier, more powerful neighbor."

The New York Daily News (1/26, Joseph, 4.45M) says Trump would also need to formally pull the US out of NAFTA to implement such a tax, since the trade agreement "bans unilateral decisions on new taxes and tariffs between the countries." The New York Times (1/26, Bradsher, Abrams, Vlasic, Subscription Publication, 13.9M), in an examination of the prospect of broader import taxes, says "linking the plan to Mexico left corporate groups mostly silent, leery of offending the president by criticizing him but also leery of offending Americans who dislike Mr. Trump's denunciations of Mexico and Mexican immigrants."

The New York Times (1/26, Shear, Subscription Publication, 13.9M), the Washington Times (1/26, Dinan, 272K), and US News & World Report (1/26, Soergel, 1.02M) also report on the prospects for a Mexican import tax. The New York Times (1/26, Porter, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) also examines other ways to "make Mexico pay" for the wall, including "impounding remittances of Mexicans working in the United States, or charging Mexicans more for visas." But in terms of the former, "Mexicans would come up with other conduits to send the $100 a week that their parents, children or siblings back home rely on to pay the bills," and taxing remittances "might be illegal...as discriminatory on the basis of national origin."

John Hay Professor of International Studies at Brown University's Watson Institute Peter Andreas argues in an op-ed for the Washington Post (11/21, Graff, 11.43M) Monkey Cage that Trump will build the wall and "it may be one of his biggest political successes." Because much of the wall is already built – "Trump's predecessors carefully avoided calling any new border barriers a 'wall,'" Andreas says "regardless of what Trump ends up building, calling it a 'wall' will sound like something new and make his followers cheer."

The USA Today (1/26, 5.28M) Editorial Board argues Trump's wall "has all the hallmarks of a multibillion dollar boondoggle." Because "most of California, Arizona and New Mexico already have some kind of barrier," combined with declines in illegal immigrants, USA Today argues "Trump's wall would be a colossal waste of money." Additionally, the contention about who will foot the bill could potentially "set off a mutually destructive trade war and effectively make U.S. consumers pick up the tab."

Sources offering additional coverage include the Wall Street Journal (1/26, Córdoba, Nicholas, Subscription Publication, 6.37M), Reuters (1/26, Rampton, Chiacu, Heavey), the New York Times (1/26, Irwin, Subscription Publication, 13.9M), Newsweek (1/26, Cadei, 862K), Public Radio International (1/26, 36K), ABC News (1/26, Marshall, Siegel, 3.09M), Philly (PA) (1/26, TAYLOR, CALDWELL, 942K), the Washington (DC) Post (1/26, Snell, 11.43M), the AP (1/26, Taylor, Caldwell), and the AP (1/26, Spagat, Watson) in a second article.

Nieto Cancels Meeting, Blasts Plans For Border Wall. President Trump's move to begin planning the border wall with Mexico continued to receive widespread television coverage, as did suggestions from the White House that Mexico could pay for the wall through a tax on the country's imports to the US. Coverage tended to criticize that suggestion, with several officials saying such a tax would end up hurting Americans.

In its lead story, ABC World News Tonight (1/26, lead story, 4:10, Muir, 14.63M) reported Mexican President Enrique Nieto on Wednesday announced he is canceling a planned visit to the White House next week after President Trump on Tuesday signed an executive order to move forward with plans to

build a border wall. Hours after Trump told ABC that the US would initially pay for the wall and later be reimbursed by Mexico, Nieto addressed the American people, saying, "I've said it once and again. ... Mexico offers and demands respect as the sovereign nation we are." After Nieto's cancellation, Trump "insisted" it was a mutual decision. Trump: "The President of Mexico and myself have agreed to cancel our planned meeting scheduled for next week. Unless Mexico is going to treat the United States fairly, with respect, such a meeting would be fruitless, and I want to go a different route."

CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 (1/26, 686K) said Nieto announced the canceled meeting on Twitter.

NBC Nightly News (1/26, lead story, 3:00, Holt, 16.61M) said in its lead story that Mexico is "clearly agitated," because apart from Nieto's cancellation, Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray "abruptly cancell[ed] his own visit to the Homeland Security Department today. An agency official telling the NBC News, he simply drove past the entrance without stopping." When Trump told lawmakers at a Republican retreat about not meeting with Nieto, "he was met with silence," with one lawmaker telling NBC that "the President needs to be careful to keep a friendly relationship with one of our key allies, closest trading partners, and our nearest neighbor."

Fox News' Special Report (1/26, 1.53M) said, "It only took four days of his first official working week but...Trump is already deeply embroiled in his very first diplomatic spat. It began last night when...Nieto publicly scolded President Trump." Nieto was shown saying, "I am saddened and against the decision by the United States to continue with the construction of a wall that for years, far from joining us, has divided us." In its lead story, the CBS Evening News (1/26, lead story, 2:45, Pelley, 11.17M) similarly reported that in a new addition to the "chaotic first week for the Trump Administration," Trump "insulted the President of Mexico with a tweet, and now their summit meeting in Washington is off." According to Margaret Brennan, White House press secretary Sean Spicer "said a 20 percent tax on imports [from Mexico] would generate enough money" for Mexico to pay for the wall. However, White House chief of staff Reince Priebus later said the import tax was just "one of a buffet of options," and "aides said the tax could range from five percent to 20 percent."

Manu Raju reported on CNN's Situation Room (1/26, 554K) that "some top Republicans are growing increasingly concerned about the President's policies towards Mexico," including the "recent proposal by the White House to impose a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports." GOP Sen. John Cornyn was shown saying, "I don't see any benefit in trying to crawl back into our shell as a country. We can't do that economically. We're obviously next door to Mexico. As I frequently tell my friends in Mexico, I said, 'We can't get a divorce. We need to figure out how to make this marriage work.'" CNN's Situation Room (1/26, 554K) reported that the 20 percent tax on Mexican imports drew immediate push back from Sens. Lindsey Graham and John McCain, and now the White House is "starting to walk that back," with Spicer "saying this is just one thing they're looking at."

Manuel Bojorquez said on the CBS Evening News (1/26, story 2, 2:20, Pelley, 11.17M) that while Trump has said the entire wall would cost $8 billion to $12 billion, "analysts say it could hit $40 billion." Bojorquez added that there are also "practical challenges, like building on private lands, over remote mountains, and on national parks." Dennis Nixon, one of the Trump campaign's top fundraisers in Texas, opposes the wall, and says that those who supported Trump on the notion that he'd build it are "wrong. Because they have not looked at the data."

Appearing on CNN's Situation Room (1/26, 554K), Sen. Robert Menendez said plans for the wall and the proposed tax on Mexican imports represents "a major, major challenge to the US-Mexico relationship which is important to us in so many different dimensions." He said Trump's vow that Mexico will pay for the wall is "just impossible to accept for the President of Mexico and the Mexican people," adding that he is worried that it could start a trade war because Mexico could respond to the import tax by implementing a "20 percent [tax] on the $267 billion that the United States sells in goods and services to their country. Those are goods and services made by Americans here. Jobs in the United States. And at the end of the day, if that's what's going to happen, American workers suffer." Menendez later added (1/26, 554K), "I don't believe the taxpayers of the United States should spend nearly $20 billion dollars on...the great wall of hate, at the end of the day when that 20 billion could be spent far better in creating educational opportunity, in creating jobs, in a whole host of things that are important to our country."

Tony Wayne, the US Ambassador to Mexico under President Obama, told CNN's Situation Room (1/26, 554K) that while Mexico is "quite willing" to discuss a "range of issues" to find "agreeable" ways to move forward, the prospect of a wall is a "very emotional issue" and Trump's proposal is "seen as a sign of disrespect and an issue of national dignity."

Appearing on CNN's Situation Room (1/26, 554K), Mark Zandi, the chief economist at Moody's Analytics, said there is "nothing positive" about the idea of a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports. He explained that such a tax "would be paid by American consumers in the form of higher prices for everything that we import from Mexico." Zandi suggested that the Administration look at the 1930s when legislation was passed to increase tariffs on imported products that lead to the great depression. He stressed that he wasn't "suggesting we're going into the great depression...but that's pretty instructive."

Politico (1/26, Nelson, 2.46M) reports counselor to the president Kellyanne Conway said on NBC's "Today" on Thursday that "it is 'high time' that the U.S. spend money protecting its own border." She added, "President Trump has been very clear and consistent on this point, Matt. He's going to build the wall, Mexico will pay for it. Whether they pay for it straight-out, or it's reimbursed later on after congressional funding."

Jennifer Rubin writes in her Right Turn blog for the Washington (DC) Post (1/26, Rubin, 11.43M) to describe ten "huge flaws in Trump's immigration directives," arguing that much of the hysteria is "unrelated to actual border conditions" and that a physical wall will be "duplicative, ineffective and unnecessary."

Meeting Cancellation Latest Sign Of Quick "Souring Of Relations." The AP (1/26, Stevenson) reports that Peña Nieto's cancellation of the visit signaled "a remarkable souring of relations between Washington and one of its most important international partners just days into" the Trump Administration. The rift "capped days of increasingly confrontational remarks – on Twitter and in dueling public appearances – between" Trump and Peña Nieto.

Trump tweeted at 8:51 a.m. Thursday, "The U.S. has a 60 billion dollar trade deficit with Mexico. It has been a one-sided deal from the beginning of NAFTA with massive numbers of jobs and companies lost. If Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting." Three hours later, Peña Nieto tweeted that the meeting was cancelled, adding in a subsequent tweet that Mexico remains interested in negotiations.

The New York Times (1/26, Ahmed, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) says Trump's wall announcement "escalated into a diplomatic standoff" as Peña Nieto cancelled the meeting and Trump accused Mexico "of burdening the United States with illegal immigrants, criminals and a trade deficit. ... Having called for dialogue in the face of Mr. Trump's vows to build a wall during the American presidential campaign, Mr. Peña Nieto ultimately bowed to public pressure in Mexico to respond more forcefully to his northern neighbor."

However, the Washington Times (1/26, Miller, 272K) reports that Trump told Republicans that he and Peña Nieto mutually agreed to cancel the meeting. Trump said, "[We] have agreed to cancel our planned meeting scheduled for next week. Such a meeting would be fruitless. ... The world has taken advantage of us for many years. It's not going to happen anymore." The Los Angeles Times (1/26, Memoli, 4.52M) reports that Trump also told the GOP legislators, "The American people will not pay for the wall. It is time that the American people had a president fighting as hard for its citizens as other countries do for theirs. And that is exactly what I'm going to do for you."

In an analysis, the Washington Post (1/26, Deyoung, Rucker, 11.43M) says that in his first days in office, Trump began "to reshape the U.S. role in the world, laying the groundwork, in a series of planned and signed executive actions and statements, for the 'America first' foreign policy on which he campaigned."

The Hill (1/26, Fabian, 1.25M) says that the cancellation "escalates brewing tensions" between the US and Mexico. USA Today (1/26, Agren, 5.28M) and the NPR (1/26, Kennedy, 1.92M) website also have

brief reports on the cancellation.

Congressional GOP Expects Wall Spending Request Of Up To $15 Billion. USA Today (1/26, Kelly, 5.28M) reports, "Congressional leaders said Thursday they expect the Trump administration to send them a request soon for $12 billion to $15 billion to fund construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border." Senate Majority Leader McConnell said, "We intend to address the wall issue ourselves." House Speaker Ryan said Congress "will take up President Trump's expected request before the end of September...in the form of an emergency budget request" separate from the regular federal spending bill. The Washington Post (1/26, Sullivan, 11.43M) reports that the GOP leaders "declined to specify where that funding would come from, continuing the uncertainty over one of President Trump's signature campaign promises." The Wall Street Journal (1/26, Rubin, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) notes that congressional Republicans floated an import tax several weeks ago, but Trump criticize it at the time.

WPost, WSJournal Say Trump Has Launched Trade War With Mexico. The Washington Post (1/26, 11.43M) editorializes, "Until a few days ago, the U.S.-Mexico relationship was a strong one that benefited both countries. In the first week of his term, President Trump seems determined to change that – and for no good reason." The Post urges Administration officials to "reach out and seek to repair the week's damage. It took the United States nearly a decade to recover from the economic wreckage of the last recession. A wealth-destroying trade war with one of America's closest partners would threaten that long-sought recovery."

In an editorial headlined "Trump's Little Mexican War," the Wall Street Journal (1/26, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) says Trump has sparked a diplomatic crisis and put an important economic relationship at risk, and says Trump forced Peña Nieto into a position where negotiation was not possible.

Border Wall Tax On Mexican Crude Would Make US Drivers Pay More. Bloomberg Politics (1/26, 201K) reports US consumers would likely pay more for gasoline if President Donald Trump passes a 20 percent border wall tax to finance the construction of the barrier along the border between US and Mexico. Domestic refiners that rely on Mexican crude would most likely pass their additional costs on to the consumer. Press Secretary Sean Spicer noted the tax was only one idea being considered for how to pay for the wall. The tax would apply to countries with which the US has a trade deficit, thereby excluding Canada, but may include Saudi Arabia, the second largest foreign supplier of crude to the US.

The Detroit (MI) Free Press (1/26, Snavely, Korte, Spangler, 1.01M) reports similarly, explaining that "several automotive executives have said that the costs of a steep border tariff could be offset by Trump's plan to lower corporate taxes and relax fuel economy and other regulations," while "Wall Street analysts estimate a tariff could raise prices of vehicles from Mexico by $2,300."

Immigration Crackdown Draws Opposition, Support From Activists. According to the Los Angeles (CA) Times (1/26, Carcamo, Smith, 4.52M), Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration has "won praise from activists who for years have been trying to reduce illegal immigration," including Claremont anti-illegal immigration organization We The People Rising. The organization's executive director, Robin Hvidston, "said Trump's actions bring new hope to activists like her," arguing that "Ending sanctuary cities is a way to restore the rule of law to the cities of California and throughout the United States. ... We … are happy and encouraged that, after decades of federal lawbreaking, a president is finally taking action to enforce federal immigration laws."

Dan Stein, president of non-profit Federation for American Immigration Reform, which favors more restrictive immigration policies, argues in a USA Today (1/26, Stein, 5.28M) op-ed that, although the US-Mexico relationship "is important," the "integrated border and interior enforcement strategy will restore our national footing as a nation that will enforce its laws and protect the public interest."

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The Orange County (CA) Register (1/25, Kwong, 690K) reports on Thursday, "several dozen immigrants rights activists" assembled at the US Citizenship and Immigration Services field office in Santa Ana, California, to protest President Trump's executive orders. Mirvette Judeh Maaytah, vice chairwoman of the Arab American Civic Council, said the orders are "un-American," while Roberto Herrera, of Resilience OC, pledged to "push [sanctuary] ordinances across other cities."

The Detroit Free Press (1/26, Warikoo, 1.01M) reports that in Michigan, "many undocumented immigrants and their children worry after Trump announced" the new executive orders to "crack down on them and punish cities that seek to protect them." The paper profiles a young woman, the mother of three children, who came to the US as a child, and is a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipient. So, "she joined a wide range of immigrant and minority groups" criticizing the orders, saying they "unfairly target immigrants and Muslims." Another protester said, "this is about demonizing vulnerable families to score cheap political points." In response, "local community and religious leaders vowed to push back against his plans."

Attorneys Warn Immigrants To Stay Put. The Huffington Post (1/26, Foley, 237K) reports "immigration attorneys and advocacy groups said they were being inundated with questions from people legally in the U.S. wondering whether it would be safe for them to travel" in response to reports that Trump may sign an executive order temporarily stopping travel from majority-Muslim countries. According to the Post, "All of them, lawyers are advising, should stay put" because, "with Trump, you cannot take any risks."

Tohono O'Odham Nation To Trump: Build Wall "Over My Dead Body." The Guardian (UK) (1/26, Levin, 4.07M) reports the federally recognized Tohono O'odham Nation Native American tribe, which has "a reservation that spans 75 miles of the US-Mexico border, announced on Thursday that it does not support the wall and criticized the White House for signing an executive order without consulting the tribe." The tribe called for a meeting with Trump in the statement, which "comes after a tribal vice-chairman declared the government would build the wall 'over my dead body.'"

TRUMP EXPLAINS RESTRICTIONS ON IMMIGRANTS FROM COUNTRIES WITH HISTORY OF TERRORISM. President Trump was asked on Fox News' Hannity (1/26, 535K) about his executive orders on Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. Trump said, "Beyond just those countries. ... We are going to have extreme vetting for people coming into our country and if we think there is a problem, it is not going to be so easy for people to come in anymore." Trump added, "We have taken in tens of thousands of people. We know nothing about them. They can say they vet them. They didn't vet them. They have no papers. How can you vet somebody when you don't know anything about them and you have no papers? ... You can't."

USA Today (1/26, Jackson, 5.28M) reports President Trump said that he is not putting in place a "ban" on migration by Muslims, but is placing "restrictions on entry from countries with a history of terrorism." White House spokesman Sean Spicer said the rules have "not been decided yet," but critics are already saying "they will block law-abiding Muslims" from immigrating.

The Washington Post (1/26, Raghavan, Loveluck, Sieff, 11.43M) reports the President's "executive order to tighten the vetting of potential immigrants and visitors to the United States...will shatter countless dreams and divide families," according to "immigrants and human rights activists." The Post says that Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Iran, Libya, and Sudan would be immediately effected. Denise Bell of Amnesty International said it would be "devastating," adding that it would be "violating international law." Suzanne Akhras Sahloul, founder of the Syrian Community Network, said, "these people are escaping the very same terrorism that Trump says he's banning them for." The paper focuses on people who have been going through years-long processes to immigrate who now believe they will not be able to.

Iranian Actress To Boycott Oscars In Protest Of Visa Ban. The New York Times (1/26, Donadio, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports Iranian actress Taraneh Alidoosti, who stars in "The Salesman" – which "is up for the foreign-language Academy Award," said on Thursday that "she would boycott the Oscars ceremony to protest President Trump's announcement that he would issue a temporary ban on visas to citizens from seven predominantly Muslim countries." She tweeted, "Trump's visa ban for Iranians is racist. Whether this will include a cultural event or not, I won't attend the #AcademyAwards

2017 in protest."

TRUMP PREPARED TO BLOCK SYRIAN REFUGEES, SET UP SAFE ZONES IN SYRIA. In a report on Syrian refugee families who recently escaped Aleppo to live in the US, the CBS Evening News (1/26, story 3, 2:20, Muir, 11.17M) said that President Trump, citing security, "is expected to block refugees from Syria." Trump has also called for the creation of safe zones in Syria, reported Fox News' Special Report (1/26, 1.53M), as one of the "key provisions" in a "sweeping series of measures the President says will help defend America against terrorism." Other provisions include a "30-day ban on most visa entries from nations that are hotbeds of terrorism," while refugee admissions are also expected to be "reduced by 50 percent." Fox News' The O'Reilly Factor (1/26, 767K) reported that Trump will sign an executive order "suspending all immigration for 30 days from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen until a new vetting system can be adopted."

Fox News' Special Report (1/26, 1.53M) reported White House spokesman Sean Spicer also said the State Department "is going to withhold visas and other tools to make sure countries accept and return the criminals that came from their country." While also reporting that one of Trump's executive orders cracks down on sanctuary cities for undocumented immigrants, NBC Nightly News (1/26, story 6, 2:10, Holt, 16.61M) said, "Nationwide, there are no concrete numbers on how many violent crimes are committed by undocumented immigrants. Now, a court battle is brewing over whether President Trump's order is legal."

Albright Pledges To Register As Muslim In Solidarity. USA Today (1/26, Rossman, 5.28M) reports former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Wednesday tweeted that she is prepared to register as a Muslim, joining "thousands of people who have pledged to register as a Muslim" in response to "Trump's support of a Muslim registry on the campaign trail." Albright also tweeted her support for refugees, saying, "There is no fine print on the Statue of Liberty. America must remain open to people of all faiths & backgrounds. #RefugeesWelcome."

Law Professor: US Already Tried "Extreme Vetting" For Muslims. UCLA School of Law professor and UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies director Asli Ü. Bâli argues in a Washington Post (1/26, Bâli, 11.43M) op-ed that the US has already tried "extreme vetting" tactics on immigrants – including the "recently discontinued Bush-era" National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) program, which failed "to achieve its avowed goals." NSEERS required "male noncitizens over the age of 16 traveling to or present in the United States from 24 Arab- or Muslim-majority countries (plus North Korea)" to register and "be fingerprinted, photographed and interrogated." Bâli argues that federal courts, which "found the NSEERS program constitutional," may come to a "different conclusion if new programs were shown to be based on religious animus."

TRUMP ORDERS DHS TO PRODUCE LIST OF SANCTUARY CITIES. The Washington Times (1/26, Dinan, 272K) reports Wednesday, President Trump ordered the Homeland Security Department to develop and release "a name-and-shame list of sanctuary cities" as part of "two new executive orders erasing decades of previous immigration enforcement policy." According to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, there are 279 cities and counties that "refused to cooperate on at least some deportations in 2016."

DHS SAYS REFUGEE INTERVIEW TRIPS DELAYED, NOT CANCELED. Reuters (1/26, Torbati) reports the Department of Homeland Security has temporarily ceased staff trips to interview refugees abroad as it anticipates likely policy changes by President Trump, according to two sources with knowledge of the decision. Reuters says the move "effectively amounts to a pause in future refugee admissions," because the interviews "are a crucial step in an often years-long process."

The AP (1/26) reports spokeswoman Gillian Christensen for the Department of Homeland Security said that "trips have not been officially canceled" for officials traveling to conduct refugee interviews, though they have been delayed. The AP cites a State Department officials who indicated the travel suspension is effective until February 15.

The delay, however, "effectively pauses future refugee admissions amid speculation that President Trump may drastically change US refugee policy," The Hill (1/26, Hensch, 1.25M) reports, citing Reuters.

Newsweek (1/26, Reuters, 862K) reports the possibility of future admissions delay, with President Trump "expected to sign an executive order that would include a temporary ban on all refugees, and a suspension of visas for citizens of Syria and six other Middle Eastern and African countries."

CNN (1/26, Mallonee, 29.79M) provides similar coverage.

OPPONENT OF BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP MAY JOIN DHS IN IMMIGRATION-RELATED POSITION. The Washington Post (1/26, Hsu, 11.43M) reports that "two former US officials informed of transition changes by department personnel" say Center for Immigration Studies policy analyst Jon D. Feere, a "prominent advocate of ending US birthright citizenship is in line to join the Trump administration in an immigration-related position at the Department of Homeland Security." The Post says Feere "testified before the House Judiciary subcommittee on immigration in 2015 and has written several opinion pieces...proposing alternatives to a constitutional amendment by which Congress could enact a law or President Trump could issue an executive order denying citizenship, US passports or Social Security numbers to American-born children of people in the country illegally."

CONTINUING COVERAGE: DHS IG LOOKING INTO ALLEGED GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE BREACH. Fox News (1/26, Hickey, 11.07M) reports the DHS Inspector General's office "is investigating allegations that Department of Homeland Security officials improperly attempted to breach the Georgia secretary of state's internal elections network last year." DHS IG spokeswoman Erica Paulson "confirmed the office has launched an investigation."

DOJ FIGHTS ORDER TO PRESERVE EX-DHS OFFICIALS' EMAILS. Politico (1/26, Gerstein, 2.46M) reports in its "Under The Radar" blog that the Justice Department is asking a federal judge "to reconsider an order requiring four former Department of Homeland Security officials, including ex-Secretary Jeh Johnson, to preserve many of their emails stored on private accounts." Politico notes that last week, US District Court Judge Randolph Moss "ordered that Johnson and three former top DHS officials move messages they stored in online, personal accounts to thumb drives or hard drives for safekeeping." Judge Moss "said he ordered the move out of 'an abundance of caution' in connection with a Judicial Watch Freedom of Information Act lawsuit exploring the officials' use of personal email on government computers." Justice Department attorneys "opposed the preservation order, saying the officials already pledged to hang on to any potentially responsive emails in their accounts," and on Thursday, "federal government attorneys went back to Moss, asking him to reconsider the order."

Immigration and Customs Enforcement:

COLOMBIAN DRUG TRAFFICKING SUSPECT CLAIMS TO BE ICE, DEA INFORMANT. The Miami Herald (1/26, Weaver, 856K) reports Henry De Jesus Lopez Londoño, "an elusive cocaine-trafficking suspect" who "was finally extradited to Miami in November," was working "a confidential informant – or 'deep cover mole' – for two federal agencies, his lawyers say in court documents unsealed Thursday." Lopez Londoño's attorneys claim the defendant "put his life on the line to help the war on drugs – including infiltrating a dangerous drug-trafficking cartel headed by Mexican kingpin Joaquin 'El Chapo' Guzman, as well as paramilitary groups and members of the al-Qaida terrorist network in Colombia" – and "was promised 'favorable treatment' by agents" from ICE and DEA. The Herald adds that the US Attorney's office in Miami has "confirmed that Lopez Londoño was once" an ICE source, "but prosecutors said the DEA 'never' formally used him as an informant."

ICE AGENT ALLEGEDLY RAIDED LAS VEGAS KOREAN RESTAURANT IN EXCHANGE FOR FREE FOOD. The Washington Post (1/26, Schmidt, 11.43M) reports a lawsuit filed by owners of Club Yamang, a popular Las Vegas Korean club, alleges ICE special agent Joohoon David Lee "had been harassing the restaurant owners and employees in exchange for copious amounts of free food and drinks at a rival Las Vegas supper club, Club Sonagi, also popular for its Korean food, music and attractive hostesses." The suit claims "Lee and the owner of Club Sonagi 'hatched a plan to drive Club Yamang out of business and into financial ruin,'" in return for which Lee would be "comped" for all food and drinks at Club Sonagi. Lee was indicted in 2015 "in an unrelated bribery case in Los Angeles, pleading guilty months later," which

Club Yamang owners' attorney Paul Padda said "corroborated what we had sensed regarding Lee's ulterior motives." According to the Post, the suit – "filed this month on behalf of three investors and co-owners and the now-wife of the former owner" – follows a similar suit "filed in April on behalf of the restaurant's former owner, Thomas Kim."

ICE AGENTS MISTAKENLY VISIT COMMUNITY CENTER IN SAN FRANCISCO. The San Francisco Chronicle (1/26, Barros, 2.2M) reports ICE agents "attempted to arrest two people suspected of being undocumented immigrants in the Mission District on Thursday morning, but left with no arrests made." Good Samaritan Resource Center executive director Mario Paz is quoted saying, "ICE agents arrived to our center at about 9:20 a.m. this morning. ... An agent entered our center with two papers in hand and asked if two individuals lived here ... Our staff responded that this is not a residency, that this is a community center." Paz "said it was no coincidence that the visit occurred the day after President Donald Trump threatened to cut federal funding for sanctuary cities like San Francisco."

The San Francisco Examiner (1/26, Rodriguez, 425K) reports ICE agents "seeking an undocumented immigrant visited a home in San Francisco's Mission District on Thursday, but not before first stopping at a building housing a preschool next door by mistake, an agency spokesperson confirmed." The Examiner says the Good Samaritan Family Resource Center "contains a preschool on site, where 30 toddlers and children played feet away from where ICE agents entered the center." ICE spokesperson Virginia Kice "said the agents first went to the person's last known address and identified themselves as ICE officers, but were told the correct address was actually next door." Kice is quoted saying, "ICE's enforcement actions are targeted and lead driven, focusing on individuals who pose a threat to national security, border security, and public safety."

SFist (1/26, Barmann, 116K) says, "The immigration crackdown has begun, and some ICE agents, possibly emboldened or directed by the new Trump regime, conducted a rare raid in San Francisco Thursday, descending upon the Good Samaritan Family Resource Center in the Mission."

The Los Angeles (CA) Times (1/26, Hamilton, 4.52M) also reports, adding that ICE "said it was not a raid but a targeted effort to find a convicted sex offender wanted for deportation."

TEXAS WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CHILD PORN CHARGES. The Houston Chronicle (1/26, Banks, 1.91M) reports Tracey Lynn Bautista of League City, Texas "pleaded guilty in Galveston Thursday to receiving child pornography via texts and online messaging." Bautista "was tracked by" HSI "and the Montgomery County Precinct 1 Constable's Office after she exchanged messages with a person who had been arrested for promoting of child pornography."

Customs and Border Protection:

MORGAN RESIGNS AS BORDER PATROL CHIEF. The Washington Post (1/26, Markon, Rein, Lowery, 11.43M) reports that US Border Patrol Chief Mark Morgan "has resigned after only six months on the job." The Post says "officials familiar with the decision said that Morgan...was removed by Kevin K. McAleenan, acting commissioner of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency" – noting that Morgan had previously "clashed with the powerful Border Patrol union, which endorsed Trump for president and whose leaders were present at Trump's announcement of his immigration crackdown at Department of Homeland Security headquarters Friday." The Washington Times (1/26, Dinan, 272K) similarly reports that Morgan "has tangled with the National Border Patrol Council, the labor union that represents line agents."

According to Reuters (1/26, Ainsley), McAleenan said in a statement, "On behalf of the men and women of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Border Patrol, I want to thank Mark Morgan for his unwavering dedication to our border security mission, and recognize his life-long career in service to the nation."

The AP (1/26, Spagat, Caldwell) cites a "US official who was on brief video conference in which Morgan informed senior agents of the change," who said that Morgan "said he was asked to leave and decided to

resign rather than fight the request." The AP adds that Morgan's "forced resignation" leaves President Trump "with a leadership gap but also gives him a chance to start fresh with a Border Patrol chief of his own choosing."

According to the New York (NY) Times (1/26, Nixon, Subscription Publication, 13.9M), Morgan's last day at the agency will be Tuesday. The anonymous DHS official said "Morgan had expressed a desire to stay at the agency in the Trump administration," sending "an internal email to Border Patrol staff members after the election criticizing the immigration enforcement policies of President Barack Obama and his Homeland Security secretary, Jeh C. Johnson." Although CBP didn't say who will replace Morgan, the Times mentions former Maricopa County, Arizona sheriff Joseph Arpaio, "who clashed with the Obama administration over his illegal immigration raids, was mentioned as a possible replacement' during the presidential campaigns."

EJ Montini of the Arizona Republic (1/26, Montini, 1.1M) considers whether Arpaio is a feasible choice to replace Morgan. Montini argues that, before Trump's election "it would have been considered inappropriate and best and political suicide at worst to appoint someone to such a position while that person is facing a criminal trial." However, "we don't live in that world anymore" – so "the thing that we would be if Trump tapped Arpaio to head the border patrol is … surprised."

Sources offering similar coverage include The Hill (1/26, Firozi, 1.25M), Fox News (1/26, Housley, 11.07M), the Washington (DC) Post (1/26, Markon, Rein, Lowery, 11.43M), and the Los Angeles (CA) Times (1/26, Bennett, 4.52M).

BORDER PATROL UNION HEAD: US WILL BE SAFER WITH TRUMP'S WALL. NPR (1/26, 1.92M) carries a transcript and audio clip of an interview with head of the National Border Patrol Council, which represents Border Patrol agents, Brandon Judd. Judd discussed how border security is going to change if Trump's orders are carried out. He clarified that "we're talking about a wall in strategic locations which then helps the Border Patrol agents do their job better," rather than "a continuous wall from California down to Texas." Judd added that he expects "the country is going to be a lot safer" once the immigration measures are in place.

Fox Business (1/26, Wisner, 269K) reports Judd also appeared on the FOX Business Network Thursday to explain "why he feels 5,000 agents is enough to secure the border." He said, "It is enough. In fact, if we were able to put all the agents that we currently have on the border, we would be able to secure the border given that we get the additional technology such as the wall." However, he said many agents are assigned to duties other than protecting the border. Judd said, "If the agency determines that those individuals are needed in the places that they're at, then we do need that additional 5,000 agents in order to secure the border."

CBP AGENT'S RADIO BLOCKED KNIFE IN STRUGGLE WITH UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT. The Arizona Daily Star (1/26, Duarte, 270K) reports a Border Patrol agent was nearly stabbed by an undocumented immigrant, who "instead struck a handheld radio," during the altercation "shortly after 9 p.m. Tuesday near Three Points, according to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection news release." The Daily Star adds that the agent got "help from another agent who was in an Air and Marine Operations helicopter that landed in a clearing," after which the suspect was arrested.

Border Patrol Agent Stabbed. KVOA-TV Tucson, AZ (1/26, Palanuk, 23K) reports that a migrant attempted to stab a Border Patrol agent on Tuesday night, according to CBP. The individual "was part of a group of migrants walking through the desert near Three Points" and tried to flee, which resulted in a struggle. The agent's "hand-held radio attached to his body armor blocked the knife."

CBP AGENT CHARGED FOR PA AUTO CRASHES. The Erie (PA) Times-News (1/26, Hahn, 28K) reports US Border Patrol agent Norman A. Antuzzi, 43, of Millcreek Township is set to appear in court on February 21 to "to face 13 misdemeanor and summary charges related to a series of crashes that township police accuse Antuzzi of causing while traveling through Millcreek, while off-duty, on the afternoon of Jan. 14." The article notes that Antuzzi attorney Stephen Sebald "said Thursday afternoon that Antuzzi is currently in an inpatient treatment setting, in a special program to help people suffering

from post-traumatic stress disorder." Officials "wrote in [a] statement that Customs and Border Protection does not tolerate the misconduct of any employee, and stresses the importance of maintaining the highest levels of professionalism and integrity throughout the organization."

BORDER PATROL ARRESTS ITALIAN FELON. The Sonoran News (AZ) (1/26, 437) reports that an "talian man identified as Salvatore Marciante, 56, was apprehended in Nogales, Arizona, on Jan. 21 for being illegally present in the United States." Checks "revealed that Marciante previously resided in Staten Island, New York and was deported from the United States in 2004 after serving time for involvement in drug related criminal activity."

Transportation Security Administration:

GORKA FACES CRIMINAL CHARGE FOR TRYING TO BOARD FLIGHT WITH A GUN. The Wall Street Journal (1/26, Harris, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports that national security and terrorism analyst Sebastian Gorka, who has been selected by President Trump for a senior White House position, is facing a criminal charge for allegedly trying to bring a handgun onto a flight at Ronald Reagan National Airport last January. A TSA statement says Gorka was stopped in the airport after a TSA officer detected a 9mm caliber handgun using X-ray equipment. Gorka was cited on a state weapons charge, and the gun was confiscated.

TSA ADDS ELEVEN NEW AIRLINES TO PRECHECK PROGRAM. The Hill (1/26, Zanona, 1.25M) reports TSA has added 11 new airlines to its PreCheck program, which allows travelers to pre-register with the agency for a speedier security check at the airport, bringing "the total number of airlines participating in PreCheck to 30." The new airlines include "Aruba Airlines, Avianca, Boutique Airlines, Emirates, Key Lime Air, Miami Air International, Southern Airways Express, Spirit Airlines, Sunwing, Virgin Atlantic and Xtra Airways." According to the Hill, the PreCheck program "allows passengers who have undergone background checks to move through expedited security lanes without taking off their shoes or removing electronics from their bags."

The Cleveland (OH) Plain Dealer (1/26, Glaser, 976K) reports Spirit Airlines COO and SVP John Bendoraitis said Thursday, "We are thrilled to give our customers options for a more efficient and expedited security screening experience."

Federal Emergency Management Agency:

GOVERNOR: FEDERAL AID APPROVAL COVERS SIX STORM-DAMAGED COUNTIES IN GEORGIA. The AP (1/26) reports Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal said on Thursday that President Trump has approved federal aid for six storm-damaged counties in his state. The damage occurred last weekend, according to the AP, which points out that Trump also recently approved federal aid "for prior storms that damaged southwest Georgia on Jan. 2." Focusing solely on the more recent aid approval, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution (1/26, Bluestein, 1.41M) reports a FEMA statement "said the assistance could include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help victims recover."

An online WXIA-TV Atlanta (1/26, 415K) report, which also focuses its coverage on the more recent aid approval, notes that Deal said he is "tremendously grateful for the immediate assistance and attention President Trump has given Georgia's requests for federal aid, as well as his concern for our citizens." Deal added, "I'd also like to thank President Trump for sending the acting director of FEMA to view firsthand the horrific effects of this natural disaster. FEMA, along with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, is working to expedite financial assessments in the remaining counties impacted by the storms." The Albany (GA) Herald (1/26, Hendricks, 2K) and the WFXL-TV Albany, GA (1/26, 1K) website also highlights Deal's remarks.

WALB-TV Albany, GA (1/26, Hoskins, 42K), meanwhile, reports on its website that Turner is one of the Georgia counties covered by Trump's most recent aid approval. The story adds, "FEMA officials were on the ground" in Georgia on Thursday, "talking with folks who have lost everything."

US Citizenship and Immigration Services:

PRESIDENT OBAMA CHANGED USCIS POLICY TO ENSURE TRANSGENDER IMMIGRANTS GET DOCUMENTS. Mic (1/26, Rodriguez, 554K) reports that among the actions taken by President Obama in the last few days of his tenure in preparation for the Trump Administration was to provide assistance to "ensure transgender immigrants are able to get their legal documents in order." According to Mic, USCIS received a memo requiring that it "change the gender marker on an official document if the person applying for the document presents" either a court order, an amended government document or a letter from a licensed professional confirming the gender identity of the applicant.

Immigration:

TRUMP'S PLAN TO END "CATCH AND RELEASE" OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS MAY BE HAMPERED BY LACK OF SPACE. Reuters (1/26, Daniel) reports immigrant advocates warn President Trump's plan to end the "catch and release" policy – under which "illegal immigrants are caught and then freed pending hearings" – may "hit a will...and not the one he is planning to build on the Mexican border." Annunciation House director Ruben Garcia, whose charity "gives shelter to migrant families," warned that ICE is "releasing them not because they want to do catch and release, but because detention centers don't have enough space." Reuters points out that "almost half the immigrants apprehended by U.S. officials are now Central American families or children" but "only a tiny number of detention spaces are available for those categories of immigrants." While "Trump did announce plans to increase the number of family detention centers," Reuters says "establishing them will take time and could face legal challenges, legal experts on immigration said."

"CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCATES" OBJECT TO IMMIGRATION ORDERS. The Washington Post (1/26, Zapotosky, 11.43M) reports President Trump on Wednesday signed an order directing the homeland security secretary "to deputize local law enforcement officials to enforce immigration laws," which "civil rights advocates" say could lead police "to racially profile those they encounter." Cecillia Wang, deputy legal director at the American Civil Liberties Union, said the orders are "a shot across the bow of immigrant communities and those localities or states that are welcoming of immigrant communities." In addition, Trump is bringing back the Secure Communities program, characterized as "controversial."

Maria Cardona, a principal at the Dewey Square Group, a Democratic strategist, and a CNN/CNN Español political commentator, writes at The Hill (1/26, Cardona, Contributor, 1.25M) "Pundits Blog" blog that Trump's orders are "part of his continued attack on the immigrant, Latino, and Muslim communities." She also criticizes the "crack down on so-called sanctuary cities," arguing that "no legal term of the kind actually exists." Finally, she argues that "the solution" is "comprehensive immigration reform." She says Trump's policies would "end our America as we know it."

REACTIONS OF "SANCTUARY CITIES" TO TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS DISCUSSED. The San Francisco Chronicle (1/26, Ting, 2.2M) continues coverage of the response by mayors and cities across the country to President Trump's executive order that would cut federal funding to "sanctuary cities." The Chronicle notes some mayors have indicated their willingness "to sacrifice federal funding to keep their sanctuary status" and provides a list of mayoral statements to that effect in cities from California to New Jersey.

In California, the Los Angeles Times (1/26, Chang, Esquivel, Lau, 4.52M) says Trump's order is setting the stage "for a pitched battle with [state] officials who have long prioritized building ties with immigrant communities."

San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee in his annual state of the city speech on Thursday "reiterated the city's 'sanctuary' status," the AP (1/26) reports. The article also says Lee previously noted that Trump's threat to withhold any part of the $1 billion a year the city receives "lacked specifics so officials are unclear on what might be at stake for the city's budget."

New California Attorney General Xavier Becerra also expressed his determination to defend immigrants in the state in an interview conducted with NPR (1/26, 1.92M). He said, "We're going to do everything we can to protect the citizens and residents of the state of California." When asked what California cities can refuse to do, Becerra also noted holding people without basis violates the Fourth Amendment.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio in a Thursday CNN appearance emphasized how Trump's order "threatened to upend years of progress police departments have made cultivating trust in immigrant neighborhoods," the New York Daily News (1/26, Durkin, 4.45M) reports. He said, "This is the kind of thing that will destroy that promise, and make it impossible for the police to keep cities safe."

De Blasio moreover threatened to sue the Trump Administration, saying at a City Hall press conference, "President Trump issued an executive order today and it's purported purpose was to enhance public safety, but here in New York City and in cities across this nation this executive order could in fact undermine public safety," The Hill (1/26, Savransky, 1.25M) adds. He noted the effect of such funding cuts would "first and foremost fall on the NYPD."

Meanwhile, New York Assembly member Nicole Malliotakis indicated that NYPD statistics highlight how the city cooperated with only two of 80 ICE detainer requests, the New York Post (1/26, 3.82M) says. The Post quotes Malliotakis as saying, "It's truly frightening that our city refuses to treat criminals in accordance with federal law, and would jeopardize federal funding by harboring individuals who have committed crimes from deportation."

In Long Island, members of various immigrant, women's and minority groups and communities joined congregants on Thursday at the Bay Shore mosque "to condemn immigration enforcement orders from President Donald Trump that they said will harm the most vulnerable," Newsday (NY) (1/26, Ramos, 1.3M) reports. The article notes almost 40 individuals gathered at the mosque and said Trump's order would be "countered by their campaign for unity, with Latinos, Muslims, Jewish, LGBTQ and women's reproductive rights advocates joining so far what they're calling the Long Island Unity Collaborative."

In Chicago, immigration activists demanded Mayor Rahm Emanuel "strengthen Chicago's Welcoming City Ordinance by removing all of the exceptions," the Chicago Sun-Times (1/26, Spielman, 798K) says. Currently Chicago Police are "permitted to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement if targeted individuals are: in the city's gang database; have pending felony prosecutions or prior felony convictions or if they are the subject of an outstanding criminal warrant." Activists are demanding this be eliminated.

Joining colleagues in California, New York, Chicago, and other states and cities across the country in responding to Trump's executive orders, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution (1/26, Salzer, 1.41M) cites Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed as condemning the orders and "saying Atlanta is a welcoming community that 'has stood up for the civil and human rights of every person, and we will not waver now.'"

Similarly, the Mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul also "offered a defiant response to President Donald Trump's executive order," the Rochester (MN) Post-Bulletin (1/26, NELSON, 25K) reports. Accordingly, Minneapolis has asserted that it will not rescind its policy "that blocks police from reporting immigration violations, Mayor Betsy Hodges said Wednesday." St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman also said he does not believe Trump's order on blocking federal funds to sanctuary cities would apply to the $13 million the city gets every year.

Madison, Wisconsin Mayor Paul Soglin has additionally held firm to remaining a "sanctuary city" despite the potential loss of federal money, while Police Chief Mike Koval has also said his officers will "never inquire about immigration status," the AP (1/26) reports. Soglin said that while the city will comply with ICE detainer requests, the city itself will not detain immigrants and the police will not "enforce federal immigration laws."

Colleges and universities nationwide are also "preparing to defend their students from potential immigration raids under President Trump," though USA Today (1/26, Gomez, 5.28M) says "it's unclear how much power they actually have to shield their students." The article notes that many of these schools

have assured their undocumented student population in various ways they will not cooperate with ICE agents.

University of California system president Janet Napolitano has also moved to determine what they can do "to shelter its students if he carried through on his pledges to cancel the program, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals," the New York Times (1/26, PRESTON, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports. However, the Times also indicates Napolitano "does not mention the word 'sanctuary' when describing what the university could offer," but has instead "published detailed principles of support for undocumented students."

U.S. News & World Report (1/26, Camera, 1.02M) adds school districts across the country are also "pledging to defend illegal students," including Los Angeles Unified, Pittsburgh Public Schools, and Clark County School Board.

The Washington Examiner (1/26, Bedard, 400K), however, criticizes the fact that Democratic mayors did not speak out when President Obama targeted "sanctuary cities." It says that these mayors who are now "assailing President Trump's threat to cut off funding so-called sanctuary cities" did not do so when Obama attempted the same a year ago.

MIAMI-DADE FIRST TO BACK DOWN AND COMPLY WITH TRUMP'S "SANCTUARY" CRACKDOWN. The Miami Herald (1/26, Mazzei, 856K) reports Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez ordered county jails to comply with ICE detention requests on Thursday, fearing the loss in millions of federal dollars for "defying immigration authorities." In a memo to interim director of the corrections and rehabilitation department Daniel Junior, Gimenez wrote, "In light of the provisions of the Executive Order, I direct you and your staff to honor all immigration detainer requests received from the Department of Homeland Security."

President Trump on Thursday also "hail[ed]" Gimenez's decision as "the first victory in his fight against 'sanctuary cities,'" USA Today (1/26, Gomez, 5.28M) reports. The article says Trump "praised" Gimenez for making a decision that would ensure the country does not lose any of the $355 million in federal funds slated for 2017.

The Hill (1/26, Vladimirov, 1.25M) adds that Miami-Dade never officially called itself a "sanctuary" city and that it has requested a federal review of its status in 2016.

However, Politico (1/26, Lima, Caputo, 2.46M) says Gimenez indicated to ICE that in order for the country to honor detainer requests, it would "need to start cooperating with the county and paying for the detention of illegal immigrants in one of the nation's largest counties of foreign-born residents." Gimenez said, "If ICE asks us to detain someone we arrested – not for immigration issues because we're not immigration officers – we feel ICE should pay the bill and bear the responsibility for housing their inmate."

STATE RESPONSES TO TRUMP'S SANCTUARY CITIES ORDER MIXED. The Syracuse (NY) Post-Standard (1/26, Weiner, 531K) reports Onondaga County, New York Sheriff Gene Conway on Wednesday "said...he has never received a request from federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials to detain an undocumented immigrant during his two years in office." He said that if he were to receive such a request, he likely would comply. Conway said, "It has always been my purpose to cooperate with law enforcement, whether it is local, state or federal."

The AP (1/26, Richman) reports two Howard County, MD Council members, Calvin Ball and Jen Terrasa, are moving forward with new legislation that would "declare their county a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants, even after President Donald Trump announced his intention to crack down on such jurisdictions." Ball is quoted as saying, "We're at a crossroads. We have to decide what kind of community we're going to be."

Meanwhile, school board trustees in Las Vegas, Nevada "are being asked to declare an immigration safe haven for students regardless of their citizenship status," Fox News (1/26, 11.07M) reports. Clark County School District board member Carolyn Edwards proposed a resolution Thursday "to reinforce protections

for children of immigrants under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals order."

LOCAL OFFICIALS OBJECT TO SANCTUARY CITIES ORDER. The AP (1/26) reports Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) said that though one of President Trump's orders "instructs the Homeland Security secretary to engage with governors and local officials" about immigration enforcement, it is not "one of the 'primary' functions for state and local police." Snyder also said that he will "continue to promote Michigan as a welcoming place for immigrants."

The AP (1/26) reports that Iowa City officials said that though the city has a policy of not enforcing federal immigration laws, "they don't think the city will lose" federal funds. The city council did not adopt a "sanctuary city" label, but did say it does not use local resources for immigration enforcement.

The Norwich (CT) Bulletin (1/26, Kefalas, 63K) reports that Windham, and "all of Connecticut" may "be in the crosshairs of Trump's new immigration policy." That's because the Windham Town Council voted January 17 to become a Sanctuary City, and Connecticut law instructs state and local law enforcement that they may ignore federal detainers for those who have not "committed a serious felony." Under the order the Department of Homeland Security would list jurisdictions that declined to honor detainers.

The Hill (1/26, Wilson, 1.25M) reports the "sanctuary cities" order "drew swift condemnation from Democratic-led states with significant immigrant populations." Several argued that the orders were in violation of US law or the constitution and would be challenged.

COVERAGE FAULTS SANCTUARY ORDERS. The Christian Science Monitor (1/26, Jonsson, 387K) reports that in response to the order described as an order to local police "to start looking for undocumented immigrants and reporting them to federal immigration authorities for deportation," Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department spokesman Capt. Jeff Scroggin said, "No." He said that it "is just not what we do." The Monitor says that local police argue that enforcing immigration law reduces trust in police and leads to "more opportunity for criminal activity, not less." According to the Monitor, "most US police departments agree."

The New York Times (1/26, Pérez-Peña, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that while Trump says that "undocumented immigrants pose a threat to public safety," academic studies have found that "immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than people born in the United States." Still, "immigrants are a large slice of the population, and are no doubt to blame for a large share of the crime." According to the Department of Homeland Security, there are 1.9 million noncitizens in the US who have been "convicted of criminal offenses and could be deported."

NBC News (1/26, Conde, 2.67M) reports on the New Sanctuary Movement Coalition in New York City that provides training and legal advice to immigrants. They "role play immigration arrest scenarios to learn what their rights are and how to express them."

The New York Post (1/26, 3.82M) reports that under one of the orders, President Trump would "publish a weekly list of crimes committed by illegal immigrants in the Big Apple and all other sanctuary cities."

The New Yorker (1/26, Wickenden, 3.47M) describes the order as bringing "a federal assault on the hundreds of American cities that have declined to act as immigration police." The article describes illegal immigration as "an enormous, unwieldy problem, far more easily demagogued than solved." It says that Trump could reverse the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and that some of his supporters keep calling for that, but Trump has suggested "he viewed the Dreamers benignly."

LAW ENFORCEMENT GROUPS "SHARPLY DIVIDED" OVER SANCTUARY CRACKDOWN. USA Today (1/26, Johnson, 5.28M) reports that national law enforcement groups are "sharply divided" over Trump's plan to "crack down" on sanctuary cities, with some warning that "law enforcement's already fraught relationship with minority communities could be further damaged by pressing local officers to enforce immigration laws."

Plans Could Boost Private Prisons. The Arizona Republic (1/26, Roberts, 1.1M) reports that Trump's

“crackdown” on illegal immigration is “stupendous news for the private prison industry.”

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF TRUMP ORDER TO WITHHOLD FUNDING TO “SANCTUARY CITIES” DISCUSSED. The Washington Post (1/26, Somin, 11.43M) reports President Trump’s executive order to deny “sanctuary cities” federal funding “has serious constitutional problems” and “is both unconstitutional and a very dangerous precedent.” The Post says that the order could “seriously undermine constitutional federalism by forcing dissenting cities and states to obey presidential dictates, even without authorization from Congress,” and that it threatens the separation of powers.

Lawmakers nationwide also called the order “unconstitutional” and “vow[ed] to protect their diverse communities,” the Christian Science Monitor (1/26, Hoover, 387K) similarly reports. The Monitor cites legal experts who say that by threatening to withhold unspecified amounts of federal funding, Trump might be overstepping his presidential authority.

University of Denver Sturm College of Law associate professor Christopher Lasch writes in The Hill (1/26, Lasch, 1.25M) “Congress Blog” that the order “promises an era of unprecedented cruelty and, like President Trump’s other plans on immigration, is dissociated from factual and legal reality.” Lasch says Trump’s campaign rendered “sanctuary” a “dirty word” and that he justified increased enforcement and attacks on sanctuary jurisdictions by invoking the threat to “public safety.”

However, a new study published by the Center for American Progress and the National Immigration Law Center shows that “sanctuary cities show lower crime and higher economic well-being,” Atlantic’s CityLab (1/26, 175K) says. University of California, San Diego associate professor of political science Tom Wong found in an analysis of ICE data that there have been “35.5 fewer violent and property crimes per 10,000 people in sanctuary counties versus non-sanctuary ones.”

TEXAS SHERIFF RESPONDS TO ABBOTT’S CRITICISM ABOUT “SANCTUARY” STATUS. The AP (1/26) reports Travis County Sheriff Sally Hernandez on Thursday fired back at criticism leveled at her by Gov. Greg Abbott, saying that “streets are safer when people can report crimes ‘without fear of deportation.’”

Abbott, for his part, is seeking more funding lines to cut from Travis County following Hernandez’s refusal to reverse a policy that he says effectively makes Austin a “sanctuary city,” the Dallas Morning News (1/26, Grissom, 1.12M) reports. According to the Morning news, Abbott’s budget director Steven Albright on Thursday “sent a letter to the heads of all state agencies asking them to identify all funds, including federal dollars, that had been allotted to Travis County in the 2016 fiscal year.”

TRUMP’S SANCTUARY CITIES ORDER HAS EXEMPTION FOR POLICE. Reuters (1/26, Rosenberg, Levine, Sullivan) reports President Trump’s executive order to withhold federal funding from “sanctuary cities” has an exemption for police, who the article says “would be protected from cuts.” Reuters says Trump’s opponents, however, have argued such an exemption “makes it much more likely that a judge could strike down that section of the order as unconstitutional.” The article notes this is just one argument that cities and immigration groups are preparing in their fight against the order.

MISSOURI LAWMAKER PROPOSES HARSHER SENTENCES FOR ILLEGAL RE-ENTRANTS. The AP (1/26, Ballentine) reports state Senator Mike Cunningham (R) is leading Missouri lawmakers in another attempt “to pass a bill aimed at cracking down on deported immigrants who come back and commit crimes.” The proposal would establish an “illegal re-entry” sentence of up to 10 years in prison for assaults or felony offenses. According to the AP, the proposal failed “in the House after passing the Senate when it was introduced last year,” but President “Trump’s election could add momentum to such efforts in Missouri and elsewhere.” Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates Executive Director Aimee Abizera argued that Trump’s election “makes it easier for things like this to pass because already the hatred has been brought to the surface. ... People feel like they have a right to do it.” But the AP points out that “pushback” against Trump’s policies has already started in “blue states” – including New York, where a state legislator is pushing to “block the state from signing contracts or investing in companies hired to build a border wall.”

TOWNS FAIL IN EFFORTS TO BLOCK UNDOCUMENTED RESIDENTS. The Washington Post (1/26, Harlan, 11.43M) reports on six towns that "began passing laws to block undocumented immigrants from living within their borders." Those efforts were "foiled by court rulings, settlements or challenges with enforcement." In several cases, the towns also were "ordered to pay the legal fees for the civil rights groups that brought suits." The Post says that President Trump's policies too "could face legal challenges." According to the Post, Federal judges "ruled the ordinances discriminatory and unconstitutional" or the towns "backed away" under legal challenges.

REPS. CHAFFETZ, MEADOWS WARN DC MAYOR AGAINST PLANS TO USE FUNDS TO DEFEND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS. The Washington Post (1/26, Davis, 11.43M) reports Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-ID), chairman of the House Oversight Committee, and Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC), head of the subcommittee for District affairs, have written to Washington, DC Mayor Muriel E. Bowser, warning her that her "plan to use taxpayer money to defend illegal immigrants from deportation" would "violate federal law." Bowser's policy is to create a $500,000 fund to defend the district's "estimated 25,000 illegal immigrants."

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA DEVELOPS PLAN FOR POSSIBLE CANCELING OF DACA PLAN. The New York Times (1/26, Preston, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports Janet Napolitano, president of the University of California and former secretary of Homeland Security, has "moved quickly to determine what the California system could do to shelter its students" if President Trump cancels the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. As a result, "the university has published detailed principles of support for undocumented students" and also is "organizing legal help for students detained for deportation." University administrators at other schools "have flatly rejected sanctuary plans."

NEARLY 1,000 NEW YORKERS PROTEST TRUMP IMMIGRATION ORDERS. The New York Times (1/26, Robbins, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that "nearly 1,000" people participated Wednesday in a protest in New York's Washington Square Park against President Trump's executive orders regarding immigration and sanctuary cities. The protest was organized by the Council on American-Islamic Relations. In addition, Assemblyman Francisco P. Moya, (D-Queens) has proposed a measure to "limit the state's cooperation with the police in assisting immigration officers who did not have a judge's warrant to detain immigrants accused of a crime."

OPINION: DREAMERS ARE ONE IMMIGRANT GROUP TRUMP SEEMS WARY OF TARGETING. Vox (1/26, Lind, 1.15M) reports Trump, in spite of making many "immigrants living in the United States priorities for deportation," also "he took pains to reassure one group of unauthorized immigrants: unauthorized immigrants who've been protected from deportation by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program created by President Obama." Trump told ABC News's David Muir on Wednesday, "We're going to take care of everybody. ... Where you have great people who are here [and] who have done a good job – they shouldn't be worried." However, Vox says even though "the executive order doesn't put DACA recipients at risk yet," the Administration "is known to be considering an end to the program." Vox claims to have "received what appears to be a draft of an executive order that would halt the issuing of new DACA grants and the renewing of existing ones, forcing current DACA recipients to lose their protections one by one over the next two years. Trump is ultimately the person who will determine if DACA recipients have reason to worry or not."

ACTIVISTS ARGUE IMMIGRANTS DESERVE PUBLIC DEFENSE IN DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS. Jojo Annobil, executive director of the Immigrant Justice Corps, writes in the New York Daily News (1/26, Annobil, 4.45M), on the "urgent need for free and affordable competent counsel in deportation proceedings" saying that the US "continues to aggressively deport tens of thousands of vulnerable, unaccompanied minor children and mothers with children fleeing extreme violence who do not have the benefit of a lawyer." He says that the US recognizes "no right to appointed counsel in deportation proceedings." He argues that competent legal representation would speed the cases and lead to better results. He recommends public funding of immigration attorneys for those in deportation proceedings.

Heidi Altman, director of policy for the National Immigrant Justice Center, writes in the Washington Post (1/26, Altman, 11.43M), that DC Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's (D) plan for "a legal defense fund for immigrants facing deportation" would help to "protect due-process rights for all." She faults Bowser for

exempting immigrants who have a "criminal record" from receiving representation, asking, "Since when do we allow a person's rap sheet to determine whether she or he has the right to a zealous defense in court?"

TRUMP EXPANDS DEFINITION OF CRIMINAL AS IT RELATES TO DEPORTATIONS. The New York Times (1/26, Medina, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that President Trump's executive order on building a border wall includes language that provides "an expansive definition of who is considered a criminal – a category of people Mr. Trump has said he would target for deportation." The Times says a "criminal" under the definition is someone charged with a crime, even if not committed; who has committed acts "that constitute a chargeable criminal offense," engaged in "fraud or willful misrepresentation in connection with any official matter or application before a governmental agency," or "anyone who "in the judgment of an immigration officer" poses a risk to either public safety or national security."

SYRIAN REFUGEES BEING SETTLED IN VERMONT. The CBS Evening News (1/26, story 3, 2:20, Muir, 11.17M) spoke with refugees from Syria, saying that President Trump "is expected to block refugees from Syria." CBS (Axelrod) traveled to Rutland, Vermont, where 110 Syrian refugees are to be settled, in "a process now in jeopardy." Marsha Cassel, of Rutland Welcomes, is shown saying, "These are not the people that you need to fear. These people are running for their lives." Retired teacher Don Cioffi is also shown saying, "It only takes one with a vest on to blow up some of my friends. It only takes one." CBS concludes its coverage with the story of Rutland realtor Mike Khalil, who emigrated from Syria 35 years ago, is now a US citizen, and said, "If you give them the chance, the same chance that I got, they will see that these folks will be working hard."

Secret Service:

ALABAMA MAN INDICTED ON COUNTERFEITING, FIREARMS CHARGES. The Gadsden (AL) Times (1/26, 60K) reports Hollis Nikia Bullard, 22, of Birmingham was indicted Thursday "on counterfeiting and firearms charges, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office." The Times reports "Secret Service agents recovered counterfeit bills totaling more than $15,000 in the course of the investigation." Bullard faces up to 20 years in prison and a $250,000 fine for the counterfeiting charges, and up to 10 years in prison and a $250,000 fine for "being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm."

TEXAS HS TEACHER IN HOT WATER FOR "MOCK ASSASSINATION" OF TRUMP. Fox News (1/26, Starnes, 11.07M) reports a teacher at W.H. Adamson High School in Dallas, TX "has been placed on administrative leave" after posting a video to Instagram showing "her 'shooting' President Donald Trump inside a classroom while screaming, 'Die!'" The teacher reportedly posted the video to her Instagram account "with the following message: 'Watching the #inauguration in my classroom like…#no #stop #denial #squirtgun #hypocrisy #powerless #saveusall #teachthembetter #atleastitsfriday.'" According to Fox, "the Secret Service field office in Irving tells me they are aware of the incident, but declined further comment."

National Protection and Programs:

MISSOURI SENATE COMMITTEE ADVANCES REAL ID COMPLIANCE PROPOSAL. The AP (1/26) reports the Missouri state Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee voted 4-3 Thursday to advance a proposal that would bring the state "into compliance with federal driver's license requirements." The AP explains that current law "prohibits the state from complying with the federal 2005 Real ID Act, which set tougher proof-of-identity requirements in response to the 2001 terrorist attacks," but the proposed legislation would "give people a choice of getting licenses that are Real ID compliant or not."

Cyber News:

PRESIDENT APPEARS TO CONTINUE USING UNSECURED MEANS OF COMMUNICATION. Vanity Fair (1/26, Kosoff, 6.22M) reports that "one week into his tenure as president...Trump appears to still be

using private lines of communication," including his "unsecured" Android phone "for tweeting purposes." Vanity Fair notes a blog about the Android operating system "has determined Trump likely uses a Samsung Galaxy S3, which was first released five years ago." Writer Alex Dobie is quoted saying, "It's safe to say it's a good three years out of step with the latest Android security updates." Furthermore, the President's @POTUS account "seems to be connected to a Gmail address, as opposed to a secure, White House email address," and does not appear to have two-factor authentication enabled. Vanity Fair says, "The greatest national-security threat to the United States...may be Trump. ... One imagines it would not be difficult to hack the president, or to mimic his exclamatory, erratic rhetorical style, causing market chaos or, worse, a geopolitical panic."

Politico (1/26, Geller, 2.46M) says, "Reports that President Donald Trump has resumed using his Android-powered smartphone are prompting security experts to warn that his Twitter addiction could open up vulnerabilities inside the Oval Office." Computer science professor Matthew Green is quoted saying, "It's just crazy that the president is interacting with such an out-of-date and likely insecure device." Bruce Schneier, "one of the world's foremost cybersecurity experts," is quoted saying, "His off-the-shelf Android could potentially become a room bug without his knowledge. ... An attacker could certainly hijack his apps."

QUANTUM COMPUTER SOLD TO CYBERSECURITY FIRM. CNBC (1/26, 2.17M) reports, "A state-of-the-art computer system using quantum mechanics and valued at $15 million has been sold to a cyber-security firm." D-Wave, the computer's developer, "announced the sale to Temporal Defense Systems, earlier this week." D-Wave "claims that using the quantum computer will enable the cyber security firm to perform real-time security level rating, device-to-device authentication and identify, detect and prevent threats."

MICROSOFT TO CONTINUE MAKING CYBERSECURITY R&D INVESTMENTS. Reuters (1/26, Cohen) reports Microsoft "will continue to invest over $1 billion annually on cyber security research and development in the coming years, a senior executive said." Microsoft vice president of security Bharat Shah is cited saying the amount does not include acquisitions the company may make in the sector. Reuters adds, "In addition to its internal security investments, Microsoft has bought three security firms, all in Israel, in a little over two years."

AT&T "FIGHTING BACK" AGAINST FCC CLAIMS REGARDING TELECOM CYBERSECURITY. Fierce Telecom (1/26, Buckley, 912) reports, "AT&T is fighting back against claims made by the FCC that the telecom community lacks the capability to protect consumers and business customers from cyberattacks." AT&T, in a blog post, "takes issue over two claims the FCC made in its paper: service providers like AT&T don't have the incentives to protect its network and customers from cyberattacks, and the regulator's authority over cybersecurity." AT&T executive Chris Boyer is quoted writing in the post, "We're well aware of the threats to our network and our customers, and are taking meaningful steps to counter these risks."

PEW SURVEY: MOST AMERICAN ADULTS HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF MAJOR DATA BREACH. Fast Company (1/26, 2.44M) reports, "A new survey from the Pew Research Center finds that most American adults have been the victims of some kind of 'major data breach,' and that many of us don't trust big organizations to keep our data safe." Fast Company reviews "some of the more alarming numbers from the report," including that "51% of respondents said they're 'not at all confident' or 'not too confident' in social media sites keeping their information safe – and 49% feel that way about the federal government."

MARIN: CYBER PROFESSIONALS MUST COMMUNICATE WITH COMPANY MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVELY REGARDING VULNERABILITIES. NetCentrics Corporation program manager Marvin Marin writes in Government Computer News (1/26, Marin, 1K) that cybersecurity professionals may be frustrated by discussing security issues with company decision makers who accept the risk of a breach in order to keep important systems functioning. Marin says, "The blame can't rest solely on management's shoulders; perhaps cyber professionals should accept part of the blame." Marin adds, "Putting cyber risk in context and communicating it effectively makes cyber professionals the source of real, relevant, reliable threat information." Marin discusses a scenario in which a security professional discusses a potential breach in terms of a "price tag" and provides evidence that hackers are aware of and targeting the

vulnerability in question. Marin says that by discussing issues in these terms, “you have proved you understand their needs and have shown how your work can support their decision making by providing realistic, actionable solutions that will keep your organization secure.”

NEW YORK MAN LINKED TO ISIL SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN PRISON FOR NEW YEAR’S EVE PLOT. Reuters (1/26, Stempel) reports that an upstate New York man was sentenced on Thursday to 20 years in prison “after pleading guilty to conspiring to provide material support to Islamic State, in connection with his alleged role in preparing a New Year’s Eve attack in 2015 at a local club or bar.” Emanuel Lutchman, 26, of Rochester, New York was sentenced by Chief US District Judge Frank Geraci following his August 11 guilty plea. Reuters adds that the prison term “was the maximum possible, and Lutchman was also sentenced to 50 years of supervised release.” According to his plea agreement, Lutchman “admitted to having bought a machete, knives, ski masks and other items for his attack, in which he was prepared to kidnap or kill people, and planned to later release a video explaining his actions.”

CIA’S DIRECTORATE OF DIGITAL INNOVATION MAKING GOOD PROGRESS, ITS LEADERS SAY. CyberScoop (1/26, Bing) reports that the CIA’s Directorate of Digital Innovation, created by then-Director John Brennan two years ago, is now “delivering capabilities that will enable CIA to transform the business of intelligence,” said Sean Roche, the DDI’s associate deputy director. Roche’s boss, DDI Director Andrew Hallman, said, “The way we help people use digital and cyber techniques, [the DDI] will raise it to a new level.” The progress, says CyberScoop, comes as the Trump Administration and new Director Pompeo evaluate “the role, responsibility and mission of nearly every federal organization.”

CONCERN FOR CONNECTED VEHICLE HACKINGS PROMPTS FEDERAL STUDY. CIO Magazine (1/26, Steiner, 471K) reports that, following the release of a 2016 memo by the FBI, Department of Transportation, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regarding hacking risks in connected vehicles, law enforcement officials are now concerned about the use of laptops and other devices to steal vehicles as well as personal data. CIO recommends that owners with connected vehicles regularly update software, while suggesting that manufacturers increase security against malware and third-party takeovers. In the event that updates cannot be automatically installed, owners should visit dealers to verify the security of their vehicles, particularly in the event of a recall. Increased steps towards ensuring security, the magazine proposes, will also ensure customer loyalty and protection.

According to GeekWire (1/26, Stampher, 59K), a bipartisan bill prescribing a Highway Traffic Safety Administration study on cyber security in connected vehicles entered consideration in the House of Representatives Wednesday. In partnership with the Federal Trade Commission, the Defense Department, and others, the study would create a standard for isolating vehicle software systems, storing system data, and preventing data breaches. Some legislators called the process “‘a daunting challenge’” as competitors like Microsoft seek to unseat Tesla from its reign in the market by partnering with vehicle makers on “‘incredibly complicated’” platforms that can “‘handle the data,’” Microsoft executive vice president of business development Peggy Johnson said.

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE GIVEN CYBER DEFENSE AWARD BY NSA, DHS. The Danville (VA) Register & Bee (1/26, Metcalfe, 2K) reports the NSA and DHS officially designated the Danville Community College as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense, Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe announced Thursday at a DCC event. McAuliffe said, “This prestigious designation is not only good news for DCC, it is good news for the commonwealth,” while noting that more than 3,500 cybersecurity jobs in the state remain unfilled.

“DOOMSDAY CLOCK” MOVES CLOSER TO MIDNIGHT THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE 1953. NBC Nightly News (1/26, story 10, 0:30, Holt, 16.61M) reported that “scientists” have moved the “Doomsday Clock” forward to “two minutes and 30 seconds before midnight,” which is “the closest it’s been to midnight since the 1950s,” blaming “nationalism worldwide, cyber threats and active and blatant disregarding for factual science” for the change. USA Today (1/26, Bowerman, 5.28M) says the change was made due to “increasing worries over nuclear weapons and climate change.” The clock is the product of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. They set the clock at “the closest it’s been to midnight since 1953,” and “blamed a cocktail of threats ranging from dangerous political rhetoric to the potential of nuclear

threat." Rachel Bronson, the executive director and publisher of Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, issued a statement pointing to "fake news" as well as "reckless" use of words by "a President-elect of the United States...to address the twin threats of nuclear weapons and climate change." The New York Times (1/26, Bromwich, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) says "it is getting closer to midnight," but also points out that the "clock" is "not a scientific instrument, or even a physical one." The time is set by a board that has met semiannually since 1973.

U.S. News & World Report (1/26, Soergel, 1.02M), the Washington Post (1/26, 11.43M), the Los Angeles Times (1/26, Hennigan, 4.52M), the Sacramento (CA) Bee (1/26, Holley, 574K), The Hill (1/26, Firozi, 1.25M), and Reuters (1/26, Clarke) also cover this story.

ARRESTED FSB OFFICER ALLEGEDLY SPIED FOR US. USA Today (1/26, Stanglin, 5.28M) reports Sergei Mikhailov, a senior FSB intelligence officer and cybersecurity investigator, was arrested in December on treason charges for allegedly providing information to US intelligence services, according to Russian media outlets. Mikhailov was arrested with Ruslan Stoyanov, a top manager for Russia's largest cybersecurity firm, while "two other people, including Major Dmitry Dokuchaev, also an FSB officer, were arrested in connection with the case, according to Russia's REN-TV." The FSB reportedly thinks Mikhailov told US intelligence about Vladimir Fomenko and his server rental company "King Servers," which was identified by the US cybersecurity firm Threat Connect last year as an "information nexus" used by "hackers suspected of working for Russian intelligence in cyberattacks on electoral systems in Arizona and Illinois."

CYBERSECURITY WORKER SHORTAGE INCREASES BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES. TechRepublic (1/26, DeNisco, 66K) reports job postings for cybersecurity positions have gone up 74 percent over the past five years with nearly one million jobs going unfilled worldwide. That number is expected to grow to 1.5 million by 2019. However, in the US, over the past two years, interest in cybersecurity fields has increased 11 percent. As a result of high demand and low supply, applicants can be more selective in choosing a career while also earning significantly more money.

National Security News:

TRUMP SAYS ISIL ARE "SNEAKY, DIRTY RATS." In an interview on Fox News' Hannity (1/26, 535K), President Trump described ISIL as "sneaky, dirty rats. And they blow people up in a shopping center. And they blow people up in a church. These are bad people. When you are fighting Germany, and they had their uniforms and Japan, and they had their uniforms and they had their flags on the plane and the whole thing. We are fighting sneaky rats right now that are sick and demented and we are going to win."

PENTAGON SAYS MATTIS' VIEWS ON BANNED INTERROGATION TECHNIQUES ARE UNCHANGED. The Wall Street Journal (1/26, Sonne, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports that Pentagon spokesman Navy Capt. Jeff Davis said Thursday that Defense Secretary Mattis' position on banned interrogation techniques like waterboarding has not changed from the views he expressed at his confirmation hearing, which indicates that he is opposed to reinstating them.

Meanwhile, the AP (1/26, Dodds, Hinnant) says that after media reports said a draft executive order shows that President Trump is seeking input on "whether torture works, if secret CIA black sites should be used again to interrogate suspects and whether the US prison camp at Guantanamo Bay" should remain open and accept future detainees, White House press secretary Sean Spicer "said the draft order was not a 'White House-originated' document," and House Speaker Ryan said, "This is not something the Trump administration is planning on, working on." However, "rights advocates say even the smallest move backward could bring legal troubles, especially with regard to CIA black sites that were used for interrogation." The AP adds that there are concerns that "if Trump embraces past policies, there could be a backlash from extremist groups, increasing the threat of terrorism against the United States."

Human Rights Groups Condemn Trump's Comments On Torture. Reuters (1/26, Nebehay) says that the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Commission of Jurists have joined other human rights groups including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Reprieve in

condemning President Trump "for condoning torture." The rebukes come in the wake of Trump's comments in an ABC News interview that he believes "waterboarding 'worked' as an intelligence-gathering tool."

John Hohmann wrote on the Washington Post (1/26, 11.43M) "The Daily 202" blog that Trump's comments on torture during the interview have "some liberal internationalists find themselves privately pining for George W. Bush" as Bush "understood that copping to the enhanced interrogation techniques he had secretly approved could undercut our moral standing on the world stage, provide terrorists a potent recruiting tool and give our enemies an excuse to torture Americans."

WSJOURNAL ANALYSIS: DECLARING MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD TERRORISTS COULD HAVE UNEXPECTED CONSEQUENCES. In an analysis piece, the Wall Street Journal (1/26, Trofimov, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports that the Trump Administration's plans to declare the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization could have unexpected consequences in the Middle East. With Brotherhood affiliates in several countries legislatures, the move could give the perception that the US is confirming terrorist assertions that the country will not accept the outcome of democratic processes that run counter to US wishes. Additionally, critical allies in the region support the Brotherhood, including Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. A member of a Brotherhood spinoff is Prime Minister of Morocco, a Brotherhood offshoot is part of Tunisia's government coalition, and Brotherhood affiliates have members in the legislatures of Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait.

GUANTANAMO HAS CELL SPACE FOR 200 NEW CAPTIVES. The Miami Herald (1/26, Rosenberg, 856K) reports that while the US detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba has not received any new orders from the White House of the Pentagon, spokesman Navy Capt. John Filostrat said the facility "has functional cell space for perhaps 200 new captives," and "commanders are studying how to add new captives should the new president make good on his pledge to 'load it up with some bad dudes.'" Asked how quickly the detention center could take in 200 new prisoners, Filostrat replied, "Pretty quickly," but declined to elaborate, adding, "I have no further instructions. ... We're doing our job, holding them safely and humanely until we're told to transfer them or take more."

The AP (1/26, Tucker) report focuses on President Trumps embrace of "the idea of Guantanamo Bay as a jail for terror suspects," calling it "a repudiation of the Obama administration's longtime push to prosecute captured militants in the US court system." According to the AP, support for the facility "represents a total reversal of eight years of efforts to close it."

FLORIDA AIRPORT SHOOTER CHARGED WITH MURDER, NOT TERRORISM. The Miami Herald (1/26, Weaver, 856K) reports that "Fort Lauderdale airport shooter Esteban Santiago told federal agents after carrying out his deadly rampage that he was 'hearing voices,' under 'government mind control' and 'participating in jihadi chat rooms online' – but, at least for now, he's not being charged with a terrorist act." A federal grand jury on Thursday "returned an indictment that includes no accusation that he was supporting a foreign terrorist group like the Isamic State, as he suggested to FBI agents." The FBI has "found no evidence on his computer, smart phone or elsewhere to support his claims in a confession-like statement," and instead, the grand jury "charged the 26-year-old military veteran from Alaska with killing five people and injuring six others during the Jan. 6 shooting at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport – with all of the violent attack captured on surveillance video cameras."

TRUMP EXPECTED TO ASK PENTAGON FOR OPTIONS IN FIGHTING ISIL. The AP (1/26, Baldor) reports President Trump's Friday visit to the Pentagon is expected to begin a conversation on fulfilling "his inauguration address pledge to eradicate radical Islamic terrorism 'completely from the face of the Earth.'" Officials says that options are expected to include moves the Obama Administration rejected, such as adding more US troops, increasing military aid to the Kurds, sending more Apache helicopters, and "giving the U.S. military broader authority to make routine combat decisions."

UN HUMANITARIAN CHIEF ACCUSES SYRIA OF BLOCKING AID CONVOYS. The AP (1/26) reports UN humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien told the Security Council the Syrian government is, in the AP's words, "blocking aid to hundreds of thousands" by turning the a two-step approval process for humanitarian convoys into "in practice, a 10-step process."

BANA AL-ABED URGES TRUMP SAVE SYRIA'S CHILDREN. The New York Times (1/26, Specia, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports seven-year-old Bana al-Abed and her mother, Fatemah, posted an open letter to President Trump on Bana's Twitter account on Wednesday, calling for him to help the children of Syria. Bana's Twitter account "captured global attention" with its near-daily updates on life in Eastern Aleppo, although some allege Bana didn't write the tweets and her videos are "rehearsed or altered." Her family eventually fled to Turkey.

PEOPLE RETURNING TO ALEPPO. The Washington Post (1/26, Loveluck, 11.43M) reports that, following Aleppo's recapture by government forces, which "will probably be seen as the defining victory in Syria's almost six-year war," people are returning to the city, although "it will take years, if not decades, to rebuild." According to the United Nations, at least 40,000 people had returned to the area, and "the organization has allocated $19 million in emergency aid" to help them.

DECLASSIFIED CIA DOCS: PINOCHET'S CHILE WANTED SECRET BASE IN MIAMI. The Miami New Times (1/26, Minsky, 175K) reports newly declassified CIA documents show that Miami "was almost a secret base for one of the bloodiest covert operations in Latin America, one that killed tens of thousands of people across a half-dozen countries." The documents show the Chilean secret police, known as La Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA), sought for a US-sanctioned base in Miami "in the mid-'70s where operatives could carry out missions such as kidnappings and assassinations — a request that was at least considered by U.S. officials." Other documents include details on Operation Condor, based in Chile, which Long Island University professor J. Patrice McSherry said was "really a U.S.-backed 'black operations' campaign." McSherry said of the newly released documents: "One surmises that the information is still sensitive because it indicates that Washington was not only well informed of Condor but also was an unofficial or top-secret sponsor of the cross-border system."

DEFECTOR: ACCESS TO OUTSIDE INFO WILL LEAD NORTH KOREANS TO BRING DOWN KIM JONG-UN. NPR (1/26, 1.92M) reports Thae Yong-ho, the "highest-ranking defector" from North Korea "in decades," argues that bolstering the flow of information into the North will help ultimately bring down the Kim Jong-un regime. On Wednesday, Thae said the first concern his 10- and 26-year-old sons had was whether they could freely browse the Internet, because fewer than one percent of North Korea's population has Internet access. Thae says that breaking down censorship and surveillance in the North will lead to education, and once the population is "educated to that level, I am sure they will stand up."

HERSHKOVITZ: WAYS IC CAN HELP TRUMP ON TERRORISM FRONT. Former IDF intelligence officer Shay Hershkovitz, now a chief strategy officer at Wikistrat, Inc., argues in The Hill (1/26, Hershkovitz, 1.25M) says that to help President Trump implement an effective anti-terror campaign, the intelligence community "needs to emphasize the importance of tackling the root causes that sustain terror. It needs to present to the president and his senior staff a holistic view of terrorism, and insist that decision-makers divorce from one-dimensional perceptions – i.e., 'let's just smoke them out and kill 'em!'" In addition the IC must convey to Trump that a potential counter-terror partnership with Russia "'could easily work against America's interests," because Russia doesn't have the same goals in the Middle East.

MAY COULD STOP INTEL SHARING WITH US IF TORTURE TECHNIQUES RETURN. The Independent (UK) (1/26, Watts, 1.28M) reports British Prime Minister Theresa May "has indicated that the UK could stop working with US intelligence agencies if they adopt torture techniques for extracting information from suspects." During a flight to the US to meet with President Trump, May said the UK's guidelines are "very clear" in saying that the nation's intelligence can't work with other country's agencies that practice torture, and that the current stance will not change. She added, "What we think about torture is we condemn it. We do not believe in torture. That position has been clear for some time and that position is not going to change."

The Guardian (UK) (1/26, Defence, Correspondent, 4.07M) says UK intelligence agencies would face a "major dilemma" if the US did resume such interrogation methods, because the "bulk of the intelligence being assessed by the UK agencies – especially GCHQ but also the overseas agency MI6 and, to a lesser extent, M15 – comes from the US." While none of those agencies would like to lose that access, "if the intelligence had been obtained through torture it would put them in breach of international law."

However, The Guardian says UK agencies in the past have taken information "that they know comes from countries that use torture," and they could "argue that it is near impossible when sifting through raw data to distinguish what has been freely given and what has been obtained under duress."

FINDYR FOUNDER VINCI NAMED NGA DIRECTOR OF PLANS AND PROGRAMS. ExecutiveGov (1/26, Stump, 548) reports Anthony Vinci, the founder of the crowdsourced data collection firm Findyr, has been appointed to succeed Misty Tullar as the NGA's director of plans and programs. He will assume the role Jan. 30, the NGA said Wednesday. According to ExecutiveGov, NGA Director Cardillo added that Vinci "will support NGA's agile acquisition, modeling, crowdsourcing, code development, disparate data sets and anticipatory analysis efforts."

DRAFT ORDER TO SPUR DEBATE OVER USE OF OFFSHORE MILITARY TRIBUNALS. The AP (1/26, Tucker) reports a draft order that would reverse the Obama Administration's efforts to close Guantanamo Bay, and that "dramatically rethinks how the U.S. should detain, monitor and prosecute terrorist suspects," is "likely to renew a debate" about whether civilian trials or military tribunals offshore "offer a fairer and more efficient path to justice." The article quotes Eric Freedman, a constitutional law professor and legal consultant for Gitmo detainees, who says "groups opposed to American values have made extraordinarily effective use of Guantanamo and its betrayal of American values," adding, "To take a step backward would be both practically misguided and morally indefensible."

MI6 DIRECTOR: JAMES BOND'S "Q" A WOMAN IN REAL LIFE. USA Today (1/26, Onyanga-Omara, 5.28M) reports MI6 Chief Alex Younger on Wednesday told an audience at the Women in IT awards that the James Bond character "Q" is based on a woman, according to the BBC (1/26, 2.39M). USA Today says Younger revealed the information in a speech "encouraging women to join the organization" that provides the British government with foreign intelligence. Citing the BBC, Refinery29 (UK) (1/26, Gil, 5M) reports that Younger said "we've got to get over and see through the Bond thing," and that the character makes people think of a "particular sort of person that will join MI6 – whether they're really posh or going to Oxford." The New York Daily News (1/26, Gunderman, 4.45M) similarly says that Younger "urged more women to join MI6, especially in scientific and technological capacities." Younger said, "If any of you would like to join us...the real-life Q is looking forward to meeting you and I'm pleased to report that the real-life Q is a woman." Younger also told the audience that the James Bond films fail to reflect the true nature of the make up of the intelligence field, saying, "Success for me is a deeper, broader range of technological skills in MI6 and more diversity, in particular more women."

Hollywood Reporter (1/26, Ritman, 1.1M) says "it seems 007 casting directors have been getting one crucial thing wrong" about British intelligence considering the last four Qs have been played by men.

SSCI DEMOCRATS TO TRUMP: READ REPORT ON ENHANCED INTERROGATION. The Hill (1/26, Carney, 1.25M) reports in its "Floor Action" blog that Democratic members of the SSCI are "urging President Trump to read a 2014 report on the CIA's programs before deciding to restart 'enhanced interrogation.'" In a letter to Trump on Thursday, seven senators on the panel, including ranking member Mark Warner, said it is of the "utmost importance" that he read the report's findings. The letter said that the report was intended to be used for any future interrogation guidelines and "remains a critical resource for anyone considering detention and interrogation policy."

The Washington Times (1/26, Taylor, 272K) says the senators "expressed outrage" in their letter after Trump's suggestion that he is contemplating allowing the return a "program that used enhanced interrogation techniques tantamount to torture against terrorism suspects." The letter said, "To avoid making the mistakes of the past, it is of the utmost importance that you familiarize yourself with, and ensure that any Executive Branch officials involved in the formation of detention and interrogation policy review, the full Committee Study." The Times notes that no Republicans signed the letter (independent Sen. Angus King did).

TEAM BEGINS IARPA-BACKED PROJECT TO HELP ANALYSTS ASSESS QUALITY OF INFORMATION. The Syracuse (NY) Post-Standard (1/26, Moriarty, 531K) reports a team from Syracuse University, the University of Arizona, Colorado State University, and SRC Inc. begin work this month on "the 4.5-year project under an $11.5 million contract from" IARPA to develop digital tools that use

crowdsourcing to "aid analysts at the nation's intelligence agencies, including the CIA, FBI, the National Security Agency, Department of Homeland Security and the Drug Enforcement Administration." Syracuse professor Jennifer Stromer-Galley, who is leading the research team, said the application the team is building "will guide analysts" to evaluate the credibility of the information they've obtained, "list the assumptions used in judging the evidence, and identify the information they do not know and determine whether their conclusions might be different if they had the missing information."

INTEL AGENCIES TOLD TO MAKE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO WIDER IC. Secrecy News (1/26, Aftergood, 2K) reports former DNI James Clapper on Jan. 19 signed Intelligence Community Directive 121, which calls for each intelligence agency "to make information readily discoverable by and appropriately retrievable to the [entire] IC." Though the directive "has received congressional support and seems likely to continue for the foreseeable future," Secrecy News says the future of the ODNI itself is uncertain. The article notes that the SSCI last week, in a report on the fiscal year 2017 Intelligence Authorization Act, "mandated a new review of the roles and missions of the ODNI."

MAY, REPUBLICANS COUNTER TRUMP ON TORTURE. NBC Nightly News (1/26, story 2, 2:20, Holt, 16.61M) that British Prime Minister Theresa May is "is being criticized at home for cozying up to" President Trump, with "[m]any other European leaders disturbed by his proposed ban on Syrian refugees and comments on torture are keeping their distance." However, ABC World News Tonight (1/26, story 3, 3:35, Muir, 14.63M) reported that May told reporters that she disagrees with him on torture. May said, "We condemn torture and my view on that won't change, whether I'm talking to you or talking to the President of the United States." Martha Raddatz said that "even Republican leaders are countering President Trump." Sen. Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader: "I think the Director of the CIA has made it clear he is going to follow along, and I believe virtually all of my members are comfortable with the state of the law on that issue now." Rep. Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House: "And torture is illegal. Torture is not legal. We agree with it not being legal."

Fox News' Special Report (1/26, 1.53M) reported that Defense Secretary Mattis and CIA Director Pompeo "were not part of the initial conversations for" a draft order that would have overseas terror suspects sent to Guantanamo Bay where interrogations "would not be limited to the Army field manual that forbids torture." White House spokesman Sean Spicer "emphasized that the draft order was not a White House document," and congressional leadership "says the ideas" in the order "are a non-starter."

TRUMP: MANNING AN "UNGRATEFUL TRAITOR." ABC World News Tonight (1/26, story 4, 0:20, Muir, 14.63M) reported President Trump came to the "defense of President Obama" after Chelsea Manning "called Mr. Obama a weak leader. Even after he reduced Manning's sentence for giving thousands of military documents to WikiLeaks." Trump in a tweet called Manning "an ungrateful traitor."

SEVERAL STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS RESIGN IN MAJOR SHAKE-UP. ABC World News Tonight (1/26, story 3, 3:35, Muir, 14.63M) reported there was an "unusually large exodus of foreign service officers" from the State Department on Thursday when at least six resigned. Though they were "not technically fired, the appointees were told they would not be asked to stay on in the Trump administration." Fox News' Special Report (1/26, 1.53M) said the resignations of the State Department personnel – including four officials "responsible for the department's daily operations with decades of experience" – come "at a time when the agency doesn't even have a confirmed secretary to run it." Former officials reportedly "described the departures as abrupt and extraordinary."

While reporting that four "top officials" are out at the State Department, CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 (1/26, 686K) said the White House "usually asks career officials, not political appointees, career officials to stay on for a few months, not leaving a gaping hole in management." One of those who was told his "services are no longer required" was Acting Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Tom Countryman, who was informed while en route to a conference in Rome.

To keep the email to a manageable size, the national news summary is available on the website.

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TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

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LEADING DHS NEWS

Spokesman Says Trump Seeks 20 Percent Tax On Mexican Imports

By Julie Pace, AP White House Correspondent
Associated Press, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA (AP) – President Donald Trump called on fellow Republicans to help him enact "great and lasting change" at a party retreat Thursday but offered few details. Later his spokesman said the president will seek a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports to pay for a proposed border wall.

The president was greeted by cheers as he took the stage in a hotel ballroom, telling senators and House members, "This Congress is going to be the busiest Congress in decades – maybe ever."

He addressed lawmakers shortly after Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto canceled a trip to Washington next week for his first meeting with the new president due to their disagreement over which of their countries would pay to build Trump's promised wall on the border between them.

The wall is part of Trump's plan to halt illegal immigration to the U.S., and he has long insisted that Mexico will pay. Pena Nieto insists his country will not.

On the flight back to Washington, White House spokesman Sean Spicer told reporters traveling with the president that Trump will seek to impose a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports to pay for the wall. Congressional approval would be needed for such a step.

But then later, at the White House, Spicer tried to take back his earlier comments by saying the 20 percent tax is one of several options under consideration and Trump hasn't settled on it as the way to recoup construction costs for building the wall.

In Trump's remarks to lawmakers, he cast the cancellation of his engagement with Pena Nieto as a mutual decision, saying they had "agreed to cancel our planned meeting." Trump had tweeted early Thursday that "it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting" given Pena Nieto's unwillingness to pay for the border wall.

Trump's election put Republicans in control of both the White House and Congress for the first time in more than a decade. Yet Trump's often fluid ideology has sometimes put him at odds with his own party, making agreement on issues including a tax overhaul and entitlements no guarantee.

Addressing fellow Republicans, the president spoke about his agenda in broad terms and then skipped a planned question-and-answer session. He gave the lawmakers no specific marching orders for tackling the repeal and replace of "Obamacare," one of the most complicated issues Congress is expected to tackle this year.

Spicer had said Trump on Thursday would continue to exercise his executive authority to implement his agenda, but an event listed on the president's public schedule was postponed and could now take place on Friday.

The White House is considering steps to commission a probe of widespread voter fraud, restrict the flow of refugees to the U.S., and negotiate individual trade deals with countries that signed the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact. Trump took steps earlier this week to withdraw the U.S. from TPP, saying the agreement puts American workers at a disadvantage.

Trump's brief trip to Philadelphia marked his first flight on Air Force One, the familiar blue and white government plane that has long ferried presidents around the country and the world. Spokesman Sean Spicer described Trump – who traveled throughout the campaign and the transition on his own private jet – as being "in awe" of the presidential aircraft.

Trump saluted as he walked off his Marine helicopter and chatted with an Air Force officer who escorted him to the steps of the plane. He climbed the steps slowly but did not turn around and wave as presidents often do.

Follow Julie Pace at http://twitter.com/jpaceDC

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Trump May Fund Border Wall With 20 Percent Tax On Mexico Imports

By Justin Sink
Bloomberg Politics, January 26, 2017

The Trump administration is considering a 20 percent tax on imports from Mexico to pay for a wall along the southern U.S. border, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said.

"When you look at the plan that's taking shape now, using comprehensive tax reform as a means to tax imports from countries that we have a trade deficit from, like Mexico, if you tax that $50 billion at 20 percent of imports," Spicer said, "by doing that we can do $10 billion a year and easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone. "

Spicer spoke to reporters during President Donald Trump's trip to Philadelphia Thursday to address congressional Republicans at a retreat.

White House: Mexican Import Tax Just One Way To Pay For Wall

By Jordan Fabian

The Hill, January 26, 2017

White House press secretary Sean Spicer on Thursday said imposing a 20 percent tax on imports from Mexico is just one option President Trump is considering to pay for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Spicer sought to clarify his earlier comments about the plan, saying they were not meant to be an official policy rollout.

"Our job right now isn't to roll something out or be prescriptive," the spokesman told reporters inside his West Wing office. "It's to show that there are ways that the wall could be paid for. Full stop. That's it."

Asked if he was making a formal policy announcement, Spicer flatly said "no."

"The idea was that there have been questions about how the president could pay for the wall," he said. "One idea through comprehensive tax reform is that there could be this idea that Speaker Ryan and others have floated that could generate revenue."

Spicer said earlier Thursday that Trump wanted to tax all imports from Mexico at a 20 percent rate, which he said would generate $10 billion to pay for the wall.

"This is something that we've been in close contact with both houses in moving forward and creating a plan," he told reporters aboard Air Force One.

He said the provision could be included in a comprehensive tax reform package being crafted by congressional Republicans.

"This is the beginning of this plan to make sure it is done right," he said. "But, it clearly provides the funding and does so in a way that ensures that the American taxpayer is wholly respected."

His initial comments came after Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto announced he would not come to Washington for a meeting with Trump after the president said he would move forward with his plan to erect the wall — and make Mexico pay for it.

His move was interpreted as a sign Mexico will resist paying for the barrier.

The tax plan could have far-reaching consequences for American consumers and businesses while exacerbating tensions between Mexico and the U.S.

The plan could benefit exporters, such as U.S.-based aerospace companies, but hurt retailers and other American companies that manufacture goods overseas to sell in the U.S.

That could result in higher prices for American consumer goods.

It could also reduce the number of imports coming into the U.S., which would lessen the amount of revenue collected by the tax.

Spicer's initial comments were met with praise from some close Trump allies in Congress, and puzzlement from others.

The proposal, as originally explained by Spicer, appeared to be similar to a controversial provision that would tax U.S. businesses' imports and credit exports included in a House Republican tax plan.

Trump himself panned that proposal as "too complicated" in a recent interview with the Wall Street Journal.

"Many unanswered questions about proposed 'border adjustment' tax," tweeted John Cornyn (Texas), the number-two Senate Republican.

Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-S.C.), who ran against Trump in the GOP presidential primary, said the tax could hurt companies and consumers on both sides of the border.

"Simply put, any policy proposal which drives up costs of Corona, tequila, or margaritas is a big-time bad idea. Mucho Sad," he tweeted.

Trump Team Floats Tax On Mexican Imports To Fund Border Wall

By Matthew Nussbaum

Politico, January 26, 2017

President Donald Trump supports a tax on imports from Mexico to pay for his proposed border wall, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Thursday.

"When you look at the plan that's taking shape now, using comprehensive tax reform as a means to tax imports from countries that we have a trade deficit from, like Mexico," Spicer said on the flight back from Philadelphia, where Trump addressed congressional Republicans at their annual retreat. "If you tax that $50 billion at 20 percent of imports — which is by the way a practice that 160 other countries do — right now our country's policy is to tax exports and let imports flow freely in, which is ridiculous. By doing it that we can do $10

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billion a year and easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone. That's really going to provide the funding."

Story Continued Below

It was not immediately clear whether Spicer was talking about 20 percent tariff on imported goods from Mexico or a more nuanced border adjustment tax on imported goods that goes beyond Mexico.

"This is something that we've been in close contact with both houses in moving forward and creating a plan," Spicer added. "It clearly provides the funding and does so in a way that the American taxpayer is wholly respected."

The proposed tax appears aimed at realizing Trump's longstanding promise that Mexico would pay for the wall. Should companies pass on the cost of the tax to costumers, however, it would mean American consumers were shouldered some or all of the burden.

The announcement comes after Trump took executive actions Wednesday to crack down on illegal immigration, including directing funds to begin construction of the wall. Speaker Paul Ryan told his colleagues in Philadelphia Wednesday that Congress would find a way to pay for the barrier.

Mexican officials have repeatedly said they will not pay for teh wall, and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto on Thursday cancelled a planned trip to Washington to meet with Trump.

"I've said many times that the American people will not pay for the wall. And I've made that clear to the government of Mexico," Trump said in Philadelphia after news of the cancellation. "To that end, the president of Mexico and myself have agreed to cancel our planned meeting scheduled for next week. Unless Mexico is going to treat the United States fairly, with respect, such a meeting would be fruitless and I want to go a different route. We have no choice."

U.S. Considering 20% Tax On Imports To Pay For Border Wall, White House Says

By Michael A. Memoli

Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2017

The Trump administration said Thursday that it would seek to impose a tax on imports, at least from countries with which the U.S. runs a trade deficit, as a way to pay for the wall on the border with Mexico that is one of President Trump's central campaign promises.

Although Trump repeatedly has said that Mexico would pay for the wall, the tax that White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer described to reporters actually would fall on U.S. consumers, not on Mexicans.

"Right now, our country's policy is to tax exports and let imports flow freely in, which is ridiculous," Spicer told reporters traveling with Trump back to Washington after a speech in Philadelphia.

By reversing that and taxing imports, "we can do $10 billion a year, and easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone. That's really going to provide the funding," Spicer said.

Although Spicer did not refer ot the tax by name, his description of it seemed to make clear that he was referring to a complicated portion of the tax reform plan proposed by House Republicans. That was confirmed by House GOP officials, including Speaker Paul Ryan's communications director, Brendan Buck.

The provision, known as a destination-based cash flow tax essentially would function as a national sales tax on imported goods and services. It's a key part of the GOP tax plan, but one that Trump has previously criticized as too complicated. As part of the plan, the House GOP would also lower the corporate tax rate to 20% from its current maximum level of 35%.

Such a tax would likely increase prices on some staples for American consumers, such as tomatoes and avocados, once U.S. retailers pass along the tax to consumers. Mexico is the second-largest supplier of agricultural imports to the U.S.

The price increase for consumers would be at least partially offset by an increased valuation in the dollar, experts have said.

Trump alluded to the plan earlier in remarks to House and Senate Republicans in Philadelphia.

"We're working on a tax reform bill that will reduce our trade deficits, increase American exports and will generate revenue from Mexico that will pay for the wall, if we decide to go that route," Trump said.

The U.S. imported $316.4 billion in goods and services from Mexico in 2015, while exporting $267.2 billion, according to the office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Mexico is the United States' third-largest supplier of imports — chiefly vehicles, electrical machinery and mineral fuels.

Trump Mulls 20% Border Tax On Mexico; Aides Later Call It Just An Option

By Gregory Korte And David Jackson

USA Today, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON — President Trump's plan for a wall along the Mexican border could be financed through a 20% border tax on all imports from the United States' third largest trading partner, the White House said Thursday.

"It clearly provides the funding and does so in a way that the American taxpayer is wholly respected," White House press secretary Sean Spicer said. "We are probably the only major country that doesn't treat imports this way."

But shortly after he announced the proposal in an unscheduled "gaggle" with reporters on Air Force One, Spicer clarified to a separate group of reporters in the West Wing

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that it was just one proposal. "There are clearly a bunch of ways it can be done," he said. "The point is American taxpayers are not going to fund it."

White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus added that it was part of a "buffet of options."

The unexpected proposal and subsequent backtracking underscored just how quickly the Trump White House is churning out policy proposals in a hectic first week in office, with a crowded calendar of meetings, speeches and executive actions.

The border tax plan would need congressional approval, and Spicer described it as the beginning of a process that would be part of overall tax reform. The tax proposal would have the benefit of dovetailing two of his signature policies: Curtailing illegal immigration and enacting more protectionist trade regulations.

But the proposal could face resistance even among Republicans.

"Border security yes, tariffs no," Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-S.C., wrote on Twitter. "Simply put, any policy proposal which drives up costs of Corona, tequila, or margaritas is a big-time bad idea. Mucho Sad."

The U.S. trade deficit with Mexico is was $49.2 billion in 2015, according to the U.S. Trade Representative. Though Spicer didn't explain how the tax would work, the principle is similar to a border adjustment tax currently being discussed in Congress, which would heavily tax imports but give a tax credit on exports.

"Right now our country's policy is to tax exports and let imports flow freely in, which is ridiculous," Spicer said.

Spicer ran through the math by applying 20% to the difference, coming up with nearly $10 billion a year.

The United States could "easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone. That's really going to provide the funding," he said.

Actual imports from Mexico totaled $316.4 billion in 2015.

White House Press Secretary Says Border Wall Will Be Funded By 20 Percent Import Tax On Mexican Goods

By Joshua Partlow

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

MEXICO CITY — President Enrique Peña Nieto on Thursday called off a trip to Washington, after President Trump launched his plan to construct a border wall and insisted he would stick Mexico with the bill. The incident opened one of the most serious rifts in memory between the United States and its southern neighbor.

Trump spokesman Sean Spicer added a stunning new detail about the proposed wall project later Thursday, saying that Trump intended to pay for it by imposing a 20 percent tax on all imports from Mexico.

Peña Nieto had been scheduled to meet with Trump on Tuesday to discuss immigration, trade and drug-war cooperation. He called off the visit after Trump tweeted that it would be "better to cancel the upcoming meeting" if Mexico was unwilling to pay for the wall.

Trump's moves have rekindled old resentments in Mexico, a country that during its history has often felt bullied and threatened by its wealthier, more powerful neighbor. The legacy of heavy-handed U.S. behavior — which includes invasions and the seizure of significant Mexican lands — has mostly been played down by a generation of Mexican leaders who have pursued pragmatic policies and mutual economic interests with both Republican and Democratic U.S. administrations.

Both Peña Nieto and Spicer said their countries were interested in maintaining positive relations. "We will keep the lines of communication open," Spicer told reporters in Washington on Thursday morning, adding that the White House would "look for a date to schedule something in the future." The Mexican president tweeted that his government was willing to work with the United States "to reach agreements that benefit both nations."

But Mexicans expressed shock and dismay as Trump moved to turn his campaign promises into reality.

Mexicans view a wall across the 2,000-mile border as a symbolic affront, part of a package of Trump policies that could cause the country serious economic pain. They include a crackdown on illegal immigrants, who send billions of dollars home, and renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA.

The treaty has allowed trade between the neighbors to mushroom. Every day, goods valued at $1.4 billion cross the U.S.-Mexico border, and millions of jobs are linked to trade on both sides. Mexico is the world's second-largest customer for American-made products, and 80 percent of Mexican exports — automobiles, flat-screen TVs, avocados — are sold to the United States.

"When we are talking about building a wall, about deporting migrants, about eliminating sanctuary cities [for migrants], about threatening to end a free-trade agreement, or to take away factories, we are really talking about causing human suffering," Margarita Zavala, a possible candidate for the presidency in 2018 and the wife of former president Felipe Calderón, said in an interview. "And after today, without a doubt, it is very difficult to negotiate from behind a wall."

Mexicans had trouble recalling a time when relations were this bad with the United States or when an American president appeared to be such a threat to Mexico's core interests.

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"Never," former president Vicente Fox said in an interview, when asked if Mexico had faced a comparable U.S. president in his lifetime. "And I never thought the U.S. people would go for a president like this."

"We don't want the ugly American, which Trump represents: that imperial gringo that used to invade our country, that used to send the Marines, that used to put and take away presidents most everywhere in the world," Fox added. "That happened in the 20th century, and this is what this guy is menacing us with."

Trump, for his part, faulted the Mexicans for damaging the relationship.

Addressing a GOP policy retreat in Philadelphia, Trump said Thursday afternoon, "The president of Mexico and myself have agreed to cancel our planned meeting" next Tuesday. "Unless Mexico is going to treat the United States fairly, with respect, such a meeting would be fruitless," he added.

It was not clear exactly how the Trump administration would impose the new tax on Mexican exports. But Spicer said it would be part of a broader plan to tax imports from countries, including Mexico, with which the United States has a trade deficit.

"If you tax that $50 billion at 20 percent of imports — which is, by the way, a practice that 160 other countries do — right now our country's policy is to tax exports and let imports flow freely in, which is ridiculous," Spicer told reporters. "By doing it that way, we can do $10 billion a year and easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone. That's really going to provide the funding."

Peña Nieto's decision to cancel the trip came a day after Trump signed an executive order to construct a border wall, one of Trump's signature promises and a rallying cry for his supporters during last year's presidential campaign. Trump has insisted that Mexico will fund it, but Peña Nieto and other Mexican officials have angrily denied they will do so.

The timing of the order was seen as further insult: Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray was flying to Washington on Tuesday when news broke about Trump's impending border wall announcement. All day Wednesday, speculation was rampant that Peña Nieto might cancel his upcoming trip.

In the meantime, Videgaray met at the White House with Craig Deare, who is in charge of Latin America on the National Security Council.

Throughout Trump's rise, Peña Nieto has been mostly respectful toward him, even inviting him to visit Mexico City as a candidate last August. Peña Nieto has tried to maintain a diplomatic approach to the new administration, suggesting that Mexico can negotiate with its largest trading partner and preserve good relations.

On Wednesday night, Peña Nieto sent out a recorded message saying that he "regrets and disapproves" of the U.S. decision to move forward with the wall. He repeated that Mexico will not pay for the wall but said he still planned to come to Washington to meet with Trump because of the importance of the negotiations.

But that decision changed after Trump's tweet on Thursday morning.

During his speech at the GOP policy retreat later in the day in Philadelphia, Trump described NAFTA as a "terrible deal, a total disaster for the United States," and said that the move of manufacturing to Mexico cost millions of American jobs and the closure of "thousands and thousands of plants" across the United States.

Rucker reported from Washington. Karen DeYoung, William Branigin and Jenna Johnson in Washington and Gabriela Martinez in Mexico City contributed to this report.

White House Plans To Pay For Border Wall With 20 Percent Tariff On Mexican Imports

By Cameron Joseph, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, January 26, 2017

The White House announced they plan to pay for a border wall with a 20% tariff on all goods coming in from Mexico, the latest salvo in an escalating feud between President Trump and the U.S.'s southern neighbor that could escalate into a trade war.

"When you look at the plan that's taking shape now, using comprehensive tax reform as a means to tax imports from countries that we have a trade deficit from, like Mexico," White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer announced to reporters aboard Air Force One, shortly after Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto announced he was canceling a planned visit to President Trump.

"If you tax that $50 billion at 20 percent of imports — which is by the way a practice that 160 other countries do — right now our country's policy is to tax exports and let imports flow freely in, which is ridiculous. By doing it that way, we can do $10 billion a year and easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone. That's really going to provide the funding," Spicer continued.

To do so, Trump would need to pull out of the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada, which bans unilateral decisions on new taxes and tariffs between the countries. Congress would also have to approve the plan — a murky proposition even with the GOP-controlled House and Senate.

23 photos view gallery Donald Trump in the White House

The move further escalates tensions between the two longtime allies and close trading partners, which have been building ever since Trump became the GOP nominee and has hit a crescendo in recent weeks as he's moved to fulfill

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campaign promises to crack down on immigrants, build a wall along the Mexican border and renegotiate NAFTA.

The fight would likely lead to retaliatory tariffs from Mexico and could damage the economies of both countries, driving up consumer prices in the U.S.

Counting The Winners And Losers From An Import-Based Tax

By Keith Bradsher, Rachel Abrams And Bill Vlasic

New York Times, January 26, 2017

The idea of a broad tax on importers is suddenly at the center of the Washington policy debate, with the inevitable counting of potential winners and losers.

Such a tax could hit retailers the hardest if it takes full effect, with their heavy reliance on products as varied as microwave ovens from China and T-shirts from Bangladesh. But few sectors of the American economy and few consumers would be unaffected.

If such a tax were imposed on imports from around the world, automakers could face hefty tax bills not only for cars imported from Mexico and elsewhere but also for the many auto parts they buy from overseas for their assembly lines in the United States. Chemical companies, supplying practically every industry, could find themselves paying more for feedstocks. And energy companies could wind up paying more for imported oil.

The Republican leadership of the House Ways and Means Committee has been working in recent months on such a plan, a border-adjusted tax, as part of an effort to cut corporate tax rates. On Thursday, the plan got caught up in a discussion of ways to make Mexico pay for a proposed border wall, before the White House stepped back from endorsing that course.

If a border-adjusted tax is used to offset a reduction in corporate tax rates, American exporters and their employees would rank among the winners.

Yet, even in its broader form, the tax plan could be politically tricky. If a tax covers oil imports, for example, it would end up falling most heavily on rural Americans, who voted heavily for President Trump but also tend to drive farther each year than residents of heavily Democratic large cities.

The tax "would be a boon for producers but it would be a negative for consumers — it's going to hit the pocketbooks of his supporters the hardest," said Ed Hirs, a managing director of Hillhouse Resources, an oil and gas company based in Houston.

Even those seemingly safe from import taxes, exporters like Boeing and American farmers, could also lose sales if other countries retaliated. Banks on Wall Street could lose overseas contracts to represent initial public offerings if foreign governments responded by steering their companies to European or Asian rivals.

By international standards, the United States puts few taxes on consumption, while taxing producers more heavily. The House Republican proposal would start to shift that balance, and one likely effect would be somewhat higher prices at retailers including gas stations and Walmart.

Many small manufacturers without overseas factories have long favored an overhaul of the United States tax code that would increase corporate taxes on importers. The money raised from such a tax increase, they have argued, could then be used to offset a reduction in the overall corporate tax rate of 35 percent.

Powerful business groups like the American Chamber of Commerce have said little about such proposals, because of deep divisions in corporate America based on who would pay the import tax and who might benefit from a reduction in corporate taxes.

But Mr. Trump and his spokesman, Sean Spicer, may have complicated the House Republicans' efforts by raising the possibility of imposing such a tax on goods from Mexico first, with the money used to pay for a wall along the Mexican border to deter illegal immigration. The White House later said it was just one of the methods being considered.

Linking the plan to Mexico left corporate groups mostly silent, leery of offending the president by criticizing him but also leery of offending Americans who dislike Mr. Trump's denunciations of Mexico and Mexican immigrants.

Industrial labor unions in the United States have been more open to increased taxes on imports from Mexico. After the November election, Dennis Williams, president of the United Automobile Workers, expressed support generally for the president's advocacy of tariffs on Mexican imports.

"I think his position on trade is right on," Mr. Williams said.

If a tax is imposed, the retailing industry, and particularly apparel retailers, could be among the hardest hit. Much of the clothing sold in the United States is made overseas, and retailers have little wiggle room to raise their prices to compensate for higher costs.

And the timing could not be worse: Retailers, particularly apparel companies and department stores, have struggled more than other sectors of the economy to recover from the recession.

Tighter budgets, Amazon and many new discount chains have conditioned shoppers never to pay full price. In recent years, that has created a discounting war that has decimated once-mighty retail titans like Macy's and other department stores.

Could those same stores start charging more because of the proposed plan to raise the costs on imports?

Unthinkable.

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But David French, senior vice president of government relations at the National Retail Federation, said that retailers would have no choice but to raise prices.

"I really hope everybody understands that what they're really talking about is a 20 percent tax on the U.S. consumer," he said on Thursday. "That's like building the wall and having the U.S. consumer pay for it."

But even if a 20 percent tax on imports were imposed, its effect on retail prices would be far smaller in percentage terms. That is because the value of imports is essentially calculated based on their wholesale value, which may be a quarter or less of the retail price for items like apparel. So the extra tax would fall on only a small share of the total costs of most companies.

Apparel companies could be among the most vulnerable if corporate taxes rise for importers of goods from all over the world, since many of the clothes sold in the United States come from China or Bangladesh. Budget-friendly retailers in particular run the risk of alienating customers by raising costs.

But while most of the retail industry is alarmed at the thought of higher import taxes, some retailers could actually win if the Republican plan goes through. Stores that operate primarily in the United States and cater to less price-sensitive shoppers could actually see their profits increase, according to some estimates. That is because the imported goods they sell actually make up a small share of their overall costs, while they spend heavily on attractive stores, American staff wages and marketing promotions.

The beauty retailer Ulta is one such company, according to Goldman Sachs, which predicted that net income could actually rise by 21 percent.

Ulta sells thousands of cosmetics from brands like Chloe and Clinique, many of which depend on overseas factories, according to the company's financial filings. But Ulta may benefit more from the part of the House Republican proposal that would reduce the 35 percent corporate tax rate.

As for the higher import taxes, "they can actually pass along some of the price," Simeon Siegel, a retailing analyst with the investment bank Nomura, said.

By contrast, a tax on imports from Mexico could wreak havoc on finely balanced supply chains in the auto industry. More than two million Mexican-made vehicles were sold in the United States in 2015, according to the International Trade Administration, representing a little over a tenth of the American market. The products range from full-size pickup trucks made by General Motors and Fiat Chrysler, midsize sedans produced by Ford, and small cars assembled by foreign automakers such as Honda and Nissan.

Some automakers are more vulnerable than others. The German automaker Volkswagen, for example, imports more than 30 percent of the vehicles it sells in the United States from Mexico. The figure is closer to 15 percent for the two largest American auto companies, G.M. and Ford.

A 20 percent tariff would probably have to be passed on, at least in part, to consumers. That could add thousands of dollars to the sticker price of affected vehicles — and perhaps cause sharp declines in their sales.

Mexico also exports about $50 billion in auto parts annually to the United States for use in American assembly plants. Tariffs on those parts would add significant costs to American-built vehicles that use them.

Mr. Trump's repeated criticisms of Mexican exports to the United States have prompted several automakers, including the big Detroit companies, to announce plans to increase investment and jobs in their American factories.

Sergio Marchionne, chief executive of Fiat Chrysler, said Thursday that policies that force car companies to curtail or abandon Mexican production would have a major impact on the industry.

"The question about repatriation of all of the manufacturing footprint into the United States has got monumental consequences to the industry over all," Mr. Marchionne said in a conference call with analysts

Trump Endorses Plan For 20% Tax On All Imports

By Michael D. Shear

New York Times, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — President Trump plans to make Mexico pay for his border wall by imposing a 20 percent tax on all imports into the United States from Mexico, raising billions of dollars that would cover the cost of the new barrier.

The proposal, which Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary, said the president discussed privately with congressional Republicans before giving remarks at a party retreat here, would be a major new economic proposal that could have far-reaching implications for consumers, manufacturers and relations between the two governments.

Mr. Spicer said the 20 percent tax on annual Mexican imports would raise $10 billion a year and would easily pay for a border wall that is estimated to cost between $8 billion and $20 billion. The value of imported goods from Mexico in 2015 was $296 billion. Mr. Spicer said taxing imports is something that 160 other countries already do.

The new tax would be imposed on Mexico as part of a tax overhaul that Mr. Trump intends to pursue with the Republican Congress. Mr. Spicer said the tax initially would apply only to Mexico, but that the president supports imposing a 20 percent tax on all imports.

Mr. Trump would need new legislation to enact such a comprehensive tax on Mexican imports.

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Trump Eyes Tax On Mexican Imports To Pay For Wall

By Stephen Dinan

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump is considering a plan to tax imports from Mexico and using the money to build his promised border wall, the White House said Thursday.

Spokesman Sean Spicer said a 20 percent tax would amount to billions of dollars a year, which could "easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone."

"That's really going to provide the funding," he said.

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Donald Trump Administration Floats 20 Percent Mexico Import Tax To Pay For Border Wall

Press secretary Sean Spicer on Thursday told reporters the administration is discussing a Mexico tariff with lawmakers.

By Andrew Soergel, Economy Reporter

U.S. News & World Report, January 26, 2017

President-elect Donald Trump walks with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto on Aug. 31 in Mexico City. (Dario Lopez-Mills/AP, file)

President Donald Trump is considering a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports to pay for a wall along America's southern border, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Thursday, sparking questions about what exactly the proposal would entail and whether it would place the burden of paying for the barrier on American taxpayers.

Spicer told reporters on Air Force One that the Trump administration has been speaking with lawmakers about including a tax on products shipped to the U.S. from Mexico as part of a broader tax reform package.

Spicer said the move would generate "$10 billion a year and easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone."

"That's really going to provide the funding," he said. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., on Thursday estimated the border wall would cost between $12 billion and $15 billion to complete.

Spicer later attempted to walk back his comments, saying the 20 percent tax is just one of multiple options on the table. White House chief of staff Reince Priebus also was later quoted as saying the proposal is part of a "buffet" of options open to the administration.

Spicer's comments came after a meeting between Trump and Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto set for next week was canceled, notably on the heels of Trump signing an order aimed at moving forward construction of the border wall and continuing to insist that Mexico in some form would foot the bill. Throughout his campaign, Trump had promised to force Mexico to pay for a border wall, though he also has said Mexico would pay for it over time.

The limited details of the plan as put forward by Spicer appeared to fall in line with a border-adjustment tax proposal championed by House Speaker Paul Ryan as part of a wider tax reform plan that would lower the corporate tax rate to 20 percent. In a tweet Thursday, Doug Andres, a Ryan spokesman, seemed to confirm as much.

Earlier this month, Trump criticized the border-adjustment idea as "too complicated," yet he also seemed to reference it while addressing congressional Republicans at a retreat in Philadelphia on Thursday.

"We're working on a tax reform bill that will reduce our trade deficits, increase American exports and will generate revenue from Mexico that will pay for the wall if we decide to go that route," Trump said.

Under Ryan's border-adjustment proposal, goods would be taxed based on where they are "consumed rather than where they are produced," effectively exempting American-made products and services from export taxes while levying taxes on imports to the country.

"Under the plan, all imports coming into the United States would be subject to the 20 percent tax, but exports would have the tax refunded – making them tax-free," Marc Thiessen, a resident fellow at conservative-leaning think tank the American Enterprise Institute, wrote in an op-ed earlier this month in The Washington Post about the plan put forward by Republicans. "Supporters see it as a way for Trump to follow through on his campaign pledge to tax imports and support exports without resorting to tariffs that would provoke a massive global trade fight."

The U.S. imported more than $270 billion in Mexican goods between January and November of last year, according to the Census Bureau, with products ranging from cars and trucks to refrigerators, tomatoes and medical instruments. America in the past two years also has run a trade deficit with its southern neighbor in the range of $50 billion to $60 billion, which – under the border-adjustment plan – would lead to tax revenue of roughly $10 billion to $12 billion, or the amount Spicer cited that would fund the wall.

Advocates argue this system wouldn't increase prices that consumers pay because the value of the dollar would naturally rise. But given the multitude of factors at play in determining currency strength – and the reduced demand for U.S. exports that comes with a strong dollar – opponents argue that U.S. consumers could still be at risk of paying higher prices on imports or facing complications from a significantly stronger dollar.

Indeed, the possible border-adjustment plan was met with skepticism from some congressional lawmakers following Spicer's comments.

Simply put, any policy proposal which drives up costs of Corona, tequila, or margaritas is a big-time bad idea. Mucho Sad. (2)— Lindsey Graham (@LindseyGrahamSC) January 26, 2017

This would be a tax on Americans to pay for the wall. When and how will Mexico reimburse? https://t.co/WlgRoVmxWh— Justin Amash (@justinamash) January 26, 2017

Many unanswered questions about proposed "border adjustment" tax— JohnCornyn (@JohnCornyn) January 26, 2017

Updated on Jan. 26, 2017: This article has been updated with additional information.

Tags: Donald Trump, Sean Spicer, taxes

Making Mexico Pay For Border Wall: Ideas Abound, And So Do Barriers

By Eduardo Porter

New York Times, January 26, 2017

Will President Trump be able to make Mexico pay for his "big, beautiful wall"? Over the course of his campaign he offered a variety of ways to dip into pots of Mexican money.

The latest, proposed on Thursday, was a 20 percent tax on imports from Mexico, which total roughly $300 billion in goods and services.

Like other proposals Mr. Trump has floated — impounding remittances of Mexicans working in the United States, or charging Mexicans more for visas — it seems straightforward. But carrying it out would be another matter.

For starters, a 20 percent tax on imports from Mexico would violate the North American Free Trade Agreement and most likely the rules of the World Trade Organization, which frowns on punitive levies imposed arbitrarily on imports from specific countries. (It is hard to tell from the tangle of announcements from Mr. Trump and his advisers whether they are planning a broad new tax regime that would affect all exports and imports. That, too, would most likely invite challenges at the W.T.O.)

Mr. Trump, of course, has also talked about taking the United States out of the global trade accord. But that might seem a bit too drastic just to get Mexico to pay perhaps $20 billion for a wall. It is likely to impose enormous costs on the American and world economies, opening the door for a free-for-all trade war. But if the president did it anyway, the people paying the 20 percent tariff would not be Mexicans, but American consumers. That 2017 Ford Fusion built in Hermosillo, Mexico? It would no longer cost $22,610. It would cost $27,132.

So what about the other ideas? The big one Mr. Trump mentioned early on is remittances. Mexico receives about $25 billion a year from Mexicans living abroad, mostly in the United States, in myriad transfers of a few hundred dollars apiece channeled primarily through services like Western Union and MoneyGram.

Mr. Trump originally threatened to simply impound remittances, a matter of dubious legal standing and some logistical complication. Later he suggested a more sophisticated strategy. He would just threaten to change rules under the Patriot Act antiterrorism law to prohibit immigrants who couldn't prove legal residence from wiring money abroad. Under threat of losing these resources, the reasoning went, the Mexican government would soon cave and offer to pay for the wall.

Remittances are indeed a big deal for Mexico. In a foreign policy speech delivered on Monday, President Enrique Peña Nieto said that ensuring "the free flow of remittances from our compatriots living in the United States" was one of 10 core Mexican objectives in the renegotiation of its relationship with America.

What Mr. Trump seems not to reckon with is that people find a way around barriers like these. Mexicans would come up with other conduits to send the $100 a week that their parents, children or siblings back home rely on to pay the bills. As the Government Accountability Office noted in a report published last year, these sorts of obstacles often have the effect of "pushing remittances out of formal financial systems to less detectable methods."

Or what about taxing remittances instead of impounding them? As Oklahoma discovered when it briefly imposed a fee on money transfers abroad in 2010, that would drive remittances into some other, untaxed channel. As Monica de Bolle of the Peterson Institute for International Economics notes, it might also reduce remittances, hitting consumption in Mexico and thus, probably, American exports.

And it might be illegal, too. Kathleen Newland of the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan research group, said that taxing remittances just to Mexico would probably be challenged as discriminatory on the basis of national origin. After all, many people who send remittances are American citizens or legal residents. Taxing remittances only by illegal immigrants would be, to say the least, implausible.

What about charging Mexicans more for visas and border cards? It would take a lot of them to add up to the cost of Mr. Trump's barrier. What's more, visa fees are dedicated by statute to finance United States consular activities around the world.

Mr. Trump could probably find some Mexican money somewhere. Twelve million Mexicans live in the United States. Mexican companies have invested nearly $20 billion in the country. There are tons of flows of money between the two. The question is whether Mr. Trump can get at it without breaking the law.

Gordon Hanson of the University of California, San Diego, notes that the two countries have an income tax treaty. That means that Washington agrees to tax Mexican

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residents subject to United States income tax at a reduced rate.

"I suppose Trump could simply violate this treaty and subject Mexican residents in the United States at a higher rate and call this part of the payment," he said.

Perhaps none of this matters. Mr. Trump has acknowledged that how Mexico pays might be complicated, which suggests he may be open to calling any flow of money part of this payment. Or as Edward Alden of the Council on Foreign Relations suggests, Mr. Trump may not actually be looking for good ideas to subtly draw money from Mexico to pay for a wall, but instead to prove strength and to humiliate the United States' southern neighbor.

"Trump is focused on the optics," he said. "He is not in the market for clever schemes."

Maybe cutting all aid to Mexico could help serve this purpose. It wouldn't pay for much. And it would amount to shooting oneself in the foot. What little aid Mexico gets from Washington is mostly destined to help finance Mexico's efforts to stop migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras from traveling across Mexico and into the United States.

But that might not matter anymore. When the dust settles on Mr. Trump's rearrangement of relations with Mexico, Mexico is unlikely to keep lending a hand. The United States' most effective tool to curb illegal immigration will be lost. And then his wall might come in handy.

Yes, Trump Will Build His Border Wall. Most Of It Is Already Built.

By E.j. Graff

Washington Post, November 21, 2016

Can Donald Trump actually keep his pledge to build a Southern border wall?

"Build that wall! Build that wall!" was a favorite chant at Trump campaign rallies. As a real estate developer, this would be his most impressive construction job. As he said early in his campaign, "I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I build them very inexpensively."

Critics were as dismissive of Trump's wall as they were of Trump as a presidential candidate. The wall proposal, they said, was nothing more than a political fantasy.

But under President Trump, the wall will not only be for real, but it may be one of his biggest political successes. Here's how.

Whatever is built or is already there, Trump will call it a wall

Words matter. When one thinks of a wall, one thinks of something solid — which, no doubt, is part of its enormous political appeal for Trump supporters. But the term "wall" is actually surprisingly fuzzy. The various Oxford dictionary definitions of a wall include "any high vertical surface, especially one that is imposing in scale." That broad definition would seem to leave Trump a lot of wiggle room.

It is important to remember that Trump's predecessors carefully avoided calling any new border barriers a "wall." Before Trump, the term was politically taboo, viewed as sending the wrong message to Mexico and to the world. When Pat Buchanan ran for president in 1996, he proposed building a "sea wall" to stop the "tidal wave" of illegal immigration across the border — and was dismissed as an extremist and ostracized by the Republican Party.

But times have changed. Trump broke the taboo. His fans have loved him for it. So regardless of what Trump ends up building, calling it a "wall" will sound like something new and make his followers cheer.

Much of the wall has already been built

Since the early 1990s, politicians of all stripes have scrambled to show their commitment to border security. During that time, annual federal funding for border and immigration control mushroomed from $1.5 billion to $19.5 billion. According to one estimate, Washington spends $5 billion more on border and immigration control than for all other federal law enforcement combined.

And the result? Hundreds of miles of metal barriers have gone up. Technologies initially developed for the military have been adapted for border enforcement. A fleet of manned and unmanned aircraft have been deployed to monitor from the air. Thousands of new agents have been hired. The size of the Border Patrol doubled in the 1990s and has more than doubled again since the beginning of the century, from about 4,000 personnel to more than 21,000.

This massive enforcement buildup has been lethal for many migrants trying to cross, with thousands of deaths to date, while enriching the smugglers on whom migrants must rely. As I showed in my book "Border Games: Policing the U.S. Mexico Divide," it has been politically rewarding for both Democrats and Republicans alike. Trump is simply taking it to the next level.

Trump has dismissed the current state of border security as "a joke," but he'll soon find that the bipartisan border policing boom started in the 1990s will be crucial to keeping his wall pledge. Trump's plan calls for a wall that covers 1,000 miles of the nearly 2,000-mile-long border — with natural obstacles covering the remainder. Nearly 700 miles of various types of border fencing are already in place, and portions of it very much look like a formidable metal wall. It is hard to imagine Trump tearing all that fencing up and starting from scratch.

What's much more realistic is that Trump will simply add more miles of fencing; reinforce existing fencing in key, visible places; and deploy even more border guards, stadium lighting, and the latest high-tech detection and surveillance equipment. The newest, tallest part of the Trump Wall —

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probably erected at one of the most visible, urban spots on the border — would be an effective backdrop for the president's celebratory news conference announcing its construction.

In the end, Trump's wall is likely to be the latest addition to the border barrier-building frenzy first launched by President Bill Clinton, greatly expanded by George W. Bush and continued by Obama. But Trump will take full ownership of it as the only president willing to actually call it a wall.

It will not stop migrants from entering the country illegally — going over, under or around it, with many of them dying in the process. But when Trump supporters grumble that the wall is too porous, Trump will no doubt promise to make the wall even longer, taller and stronger in his second term.

Trump's Wall Is A Huge Waste Of Money: Our View

USA Today, January 26, 2017

Since 2005, the federal government has added hundreds of miles of walls and fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border. It has doubled the size of the Border Patrol by hiring more than 10,000 agents. And it has ramped up spending so rapidly that it is plagued with duplicative programs.

So when President Trump says he is moving ahead with a massive border wall, it has all the hallmarks of a multibillion dollar boondoggle. And his insistence that Mexico be forced to pay for his costly campaign pledge threatens to rupture relations with an important ally and trading partner.

Physical barriers certainly have a significant place in border security. But any major expansion of the existing barriers should be done in the context of cost-benefit analysis. By any reasonable accounting, the surge of spending on border enforcement has already reached a point of diminishing return.

The federal government now spends more policing immigration than it does on all other law enforcement activities — combined. More, that is, than on drug trafficking, gangs, counterfeiting, identity theft, financial fraud, would-be assassins, routine interstate crime, illegal arms sales, computer hacking, corporate malfeasance, government corruption and the domestic part of the war on terror.

Most of California, Arizona and New Mexico already have some kind of barrier. Texas is another matter, thanks to the difficulties of building along the snaking, flood-prone Rio Grande River, and the fact that much of the border land is in private hands.

Since 2007, the estimated number of undocumented immigrants has dropped from 12.2 million to slightly more than 11 million, thanks to some combination of increased enforcement, declining birth rates and rising economies, particularly Mexico's.

This isn't to say illegal immigration has stopped outright. But it is being offset by people returning to their home countries. What's more, an estimated 35% to 50% of the inflow is people who come in legally and overstay their visas, people who are not impacted by walls or other border control efforts.

Taking all this into account, Trump's wall would be a colossal waste of money. His idea of forcing Mexico to pay for it has already led to cancellation of next week's scheduled meeting between Trump and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto. Slapping a 20% tax on imports from Mexico, which a Trump spokesman floated Thursday as a way to recoup the construction costs, would set off a mutually destructive trade war and effectively make U.S. consumers pick up the tab.

Cracking down on visa overstays and on employers who hire illegal workers would do far more to improve immigration enforcement than spending an additional $12 billion or more on steel and concrete.

Donald Trump Threatens To Cancel Meeting With Mexican President

Peña Nieto, Trump meeting is scheduled for Jan. 31

By Peter Nicholas

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Trump: Mexico Should Cancel Meeting If It Won't Pay For Wall

By Roberta Rampton, Doina Chiacu And Susan Heavey

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

How To Interpret The Trump Administration's Latest Signals On Mexico

By Neil Irwin

New York Times, January 26, 2017

The White House floated an idea on Thursday afternoon that, in initial reports, sounded like a major tariff on Mexican imports — something that would have gone a long way toward unwinding one of the United States' deepest economic relationships.

The reality of what Sean Spicer, the press secretary, suggested is a lot less dramatic. But it sends important signals about how people in the Trump administration are thinking about overhauling the tax code — and how they're thinking about claiming victory on some of the president's audacious campaign promises. It is a sign of just how fluid

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things are in this moment when so much of American public policy around taxes, trade and diplomacy is in flux.

Mr. Spicer suggested a way the administration could accomplish President Trump's goal of building a border wall paid for by Mexico. A 20 percent tax on imports from Mexico would do the trick, Mr. Spicer said.

That might sound as if Mr. Spicer was proposing that the United States slap a new tariff meant to punish Mexican exporters. Such a move would result in higher prices for American consumers, create profound challenges for industries with supply chains that span the border, and possibly prompt the collapse of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

But you get a different picture when you put Mr. Spicer's words into the context of the rapidly evolving debate in Washington around overhauling corporate taxation.

He was pointing out that in an overhaul of taxes that House Republicans are considering, imports from all countries would be taxed at 20 percent while American exports would be tax free. It's called border adjustment, and it would make the United States corporate tax code more closely resemble the value-added tax that is commonplace in other countries.

House Republicans see the policy as a way to reshape the tax code to give businesses less incentive to move operations overseas while also generating revenue they can use to reduce tax rates.

Opponents of the plan, which include major retailers, are skeptical. Among the risks: It could drive up consumer prices for all sorts of imported goods, from German cars to Mexican avocados, if the dollar does not rise as much as economists predict. And the policy may violate World Trade Organization rules, which could tangle it up in legal proceedings.

But that Mr. Spicer was floating that plan as a way to fulfill Mr. Trump's Mexican wall promises is interesting on two levels.

First, less than two weeks ago, the then-president-elect threw cold water on the House plan. "Anytime I hear border adjustment, I don't love it," Mr. Trump told The Wall Street Journal. "Because usually it means we're going to get adjusted into a bad deal."

On Thursday, Mr. Spicer was explicitly suggesting that a border tax could be used to pay for a border wall. Referring to the tax plan, he said, "This is something that we've been in close contact with both houses in moving forward."

The border adjustment strategy has plenty of enemies, and there's no certainty that it will become part of a tax overhaul bill. But the latest tea leaves suggest the administration is more open to it than it may have seemed.

The second lesson from the incident is that the Trump administration looks inclined to be flexible in finding ways to satisfy campaign promises without doing major damage to the economy or international relations.

Thursday was one of the roughest days for relations between the United States and Mexico in some time, with the cancellation of a planned visit by President Enrique Peña Nieto and tough talk from Mexico City, which adamantly refuses to pay for an expansion of a border wall.

But Mr. Spicer's comments, which he later said were meant more to offer an example than a concrete policy proposal, suggest that the administration will look for creative ways to proclaim victory on Trumpian promises. In other words, he will proclaim that Mexico has paid for the wall as promised — even if the Mexican government never literally cuts a check to pay for new concrete.

Advocates of the border adjustment tax have been fond of it because it would produce enough revenue to allow a deep reduction in tax rates. But money is fungible. So if the president can claim political victory by stating that the revenue from Mexican imports is going to pay for the wall, no one is going to stop him.

It is a messy time for the making of economic policy. The Trump campaign was notoriously light on policy detail, and the Trump administration still has many key vacancies in economic policy jobs. Nominees for Treasury secretary, commerce secretary and U.S. trade representative have not yet been confirmed, and key jobs on the Council of Economic Advisers and most undersecretary and assistant secretary jobs remain unfilled.

So the gaps are still being filled in on what the Trump administration economic policy will really mean in practice. The way to read the latest Mexico comments is as one more hint.

Donald Trump's Executive Orders: More Symbol Than Substance

By Emily Cadei

Newsweek, January 26, 2017

President Donald Trump has signed a flurry of executive orders and presidential memoranda since his swearing-in January 20—a sign of "bold action," according to his White House. But despite the pomp and circumstance of the signing ceremonies and the accompanying headlines, they do little, on their own, to advance Trump's main policy goals.

Instead, presidential scholars and policy analysts say, they are more about sending a message and setting a direction. The symbolism alone is not inconsequential, however, especially considering what it says to leaders abroad. Try Newsweek: Subscription offers

Related: Trump signs orders for border wall, 'sanctuary' cities

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"The number and the scope of what he's doing is completely normal" when compared with past presidents, "and by and large insignificant," says professor Jeffrey Engel, director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University.

George Washington University professor Matthew Dalleck has a slightly different take. "I think they are substantive, but their substance is limited," he says.

The two presidential historians agree, however, that regardless of whether it's Trump's first order—to rein in Obamacare—or Wednesday's orders to build a wall along the border with Mexico and shift immigration enforcement priorities, it will be up to the president's Cabinet officials and Congress to follow through on most of the actual policymaking.

There are plenty of potential obstacles. The executive order Trump issued Wednesday calling for the secretary of homeland security "to immediately plan, design, and construct a physical wall along the southern border" offers no cost estimate—which experts warn could be prohibitive—and it does not suggest where the money would come from. White House spokesman Sean Spicer has reiterated the idea that Mexico will ultimately pay for the wall "one way or another," but in the meantime, it will fall to American taxpayers and Congress to foot the bill. Some spendthrift Republicans could balk if the price tag spirals out of control.

Trump's order instituting a federal hiring freeze, meanwhile, includes several loopholes, granting agencies exemptions for "any positions that it deems necessary to meet national security or public safety responsibilities." The Office of Personnel Management may also grant exemptions when "otherwise necessary."

Even pending orders, drafts of which have been leaked to the press, are limited in scope. An executive order following Trump's promise of a so-called Muslim ban will last only 30 days and target just seven war-torn countries in the Middle East and North Africa that supply a relatively small number of immigrants—roughly 50,000 in 2015, or 5 percent of the more than 1 million foreigners granted permanent legal status. It does not include far larger Muslim-majority countries with their own troublesome histories of extremism, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia.

If Trump follows through on an order to suspend the admission of refugees, it would scramble the situations for some of the world's most desperate and vulnerable people. But, again, it would affect only a sliver of America's overall immigration total—the United States granted refugee status to 85,000 people in 2016. Syrians, whom the president would ban, made up 10,000 of that total. In other words, it's a symbolic and, refugee advocates argue, misguided crackdown on a small number of people that will do little to alter overall immigration flows or domestic security.

Just because a president signs executive orders, moreover, doesn't mean the commands will ultimately be carried out. As Engel points out, President Barack Obama ordered the closure of the Guantánamo Bay detention camp in Cuba on his second day in office. Eight years later, Gitmo is still up and running, although Obama did succeed in dramatically reducing the number of prisoners held there. Another Obama order, known as Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA), halts deportations for certain classes of undocumented immigrants but has been held up by legal challenges. The same could happen to several of Trump's actions on immigration enforcement.

Other orders and memos Trump has issued in recent days are more simple to execute but have less of an impact. The president declared in a memo that the United States was withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a multilateral trade agreement with nations in the Asia-Pacific. But that agreement had not yet been ratified by Congress and was already presumed dead. Trump also reopened the approval process for the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines, a blow to environmental activists. Analysts, however, largely agree that the pipelines have become outsized symbols for supporters and opponents alike and will not have a significant effect on either the environment or energy production in this country.

Trump is still considering an order to overturn the DAPA Obama order and another, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which has allowed roughly 800,000 undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States. That action stands out as one that would take immediate effect and have a widespread impact. It would set an expiration date on the legal status of these longtime American residents, who were brought to the United States illegally as children, raising questions about whether they could be rounded up and deported.

The Trump White House has indicated that participants in DACA, known as DREAMers, will not be a deportation priority, but the uncertainty is sure to roil the entire community.

Overall, however, the scope of Trump's executive orders this week underscore the importance of symbolism, whether it's the pipelines, the TPP, a border wall, a federal hiring freeze or reinstating what's known as the Mexico City Policy: barring U.S. foreign aid to groups that advise on or offer abortions. "In terms of the day-to-day, how much these things affect the average Americans' lives, it's relatively small," says Engel. "In terms of how much it demonstrates symbolically that there is a new commander in chief and a new sheriff in town, it's huge."

University of Minnesota professor Larry Jacobs, for example, does not expect Trump's Cabinet secretaries to use his executive order on health care to undermine Obamacare,

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even though they could. "I don't think that does anything except create problems for the Trump administration," he explains. "They'll be held responsible."

Instead, Jacobs expects the health and human services secretary nominee, Tom Price, to focus most of his efforts on working with Congress to pass new health care legislation. And he predicts that process will be as long and politically fraught as the battle to pass Obamacare, formally known as the Affordable Care Act, in 2010. The order, he says, is little more than a signal to his political base "that he promised to repeal Obamacare right away and he's off to the races."

Trump's orders are also intended to send a signal to the rest of the world, much the way Obama tried to do in 2009. In addition to his order to close Gitmo, Obama issued an order shortly after being sworn in outlawing the torture of foreign prisoners and nullifying related legal guidance issued under his predecessor, President George W. Bush. "It was framed not as an administrative decision but as a moral decision," says Engel. "'We are going to resurrect America's good standing in the world.'"

Trump, on the other hand, is sending a very clear message with his orders on trade, immigration and border security: that the United States is "distinct and different from the rest of the world and not necessarily a partner for the rest of the world," Engel says.

That could have weighty implications for American foreign policy and diplomacy. Obama's efforts to expand refugee resettlement, for example, were as much about reassuring partners in Europe and the Middle East that the U.S. was willing to share more of the burden stemming from the global refugee crisis as it was a humanitarian gesture. Closing the door to refugees, even temporarily, sends the opposite signal.

Trump's executive order to build a wall on the southern border, meanwhile, came the same day Mexico's foreign minister arrived in the United States for meetings with the new administration. The timing, along with the White House's insistence that Mexico will pay for the wall, is "very undiplomatic, a very big faux pas," says Vanda Felbab-Brown, a senior fellow on foreign policy at the Brookings Institution, a D.C. think tank.

Felbab-Brown warns it could have major consequences for U.S.-Mexico relations. "In practice, a huge element of the border control is cooperation with Mexican border patrol," she points out. She adds that could hurt Trump's ability to wring significant concessions from Mexican President Enrique Peña-Nieto on the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he hopes to renegotiate.

Indeed, Peña-Nieto was scheduled to meet with Trump at the White House next week. But after Trump reiterated Thursday morning on Twitter that Mexico ought to pay for "the badly needed wall," the Mexican government canceled the trip.

Trump's Plan To Build A Bigger Border Wall Has Plenty Of Critics

Public Radio International, January 26, 2017

This week at a ceremony at the Department of Homeland Security, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to begin work to "build a large physical barrier on the southern border," according to the White House.

The move is not especially welcome in Mexico, in part because Trump has vowed to make Mexico pay the cost of building the barrier. The timing, too, is interesting because it comes as Mexico's foreign and economic ministers are meeting in Washington to prepare for Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto's own visit to the capital next week.

"A lot of Mexicans here have the same questions [as] people do in the United States," says The World's Monica Campbell, who is based in Mexico City. "How do you force a country to cough up billions and billions of dollars for something that really is not in their interest? There is not really any support here in Mexico to build a bigger wall or a longer wall between the United States and Mexico."

With key diplomatic meetings coming up in Washington, Campbell says many Mexicans and Mexican Americans are hoping the Mexican government officials will stand firm against Trump and have a more constructive conversation about "how our countries can work together instead of building this wall that polarizes us even more."

So far Peña Nieto has said there will be "neither confrontation nor submission" when it comes to negotiating with Trump on trade and immigration.

But it will be a tricky negotiation, says Campbell. "Peña Nieto has to walk a fine line. At once, he has to stand firm and on the other hand there's this idea of trying to start off on the right foot with the Trump administration."

His political mission is made all the more difficult by Mexico's own set of severe economic challenges including high inflation, rising gas prices and an overall lack of public confidence that the Mexican president can rise to the challenge and step up and defend Mexico's interests in the face of the executive orders that Trump is advancing in his push to "make America great again."

If the wall does get built, it will surely change a lot of lives in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. Democrat Henry Cuellar represents that district in Congress. Cuellar says he agrees with the president's impulse, but not his solution.

"I want to make sure we have a secure border, which means that we get more border patrol, more technology, camera sensors, to make sure that we secure the border," he says. But at the same time, Cuellar is calling for a closer working relationship with "our Mexican friends."

"We don't want to have an open border, but I do know that if you put an emphasis on a 14th century solution called a 'wall' — we saw what happened with Imperial China and

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their wall, we know what happened with the Communists and their wall. It's not a very effective way of addressing the issues," Cuellar says.

In addition, he says, "over 40 percent of the people that we have in the US without documents came in through a legal permit or visa, so a wall is not going to stop them... We have to be careful on how we address this and not spend $6.5 million per mile for a fence as proposed, when we can do this with one mile of technology, each mile costing one million dollars by comparison."

Why Executive Order May Not Be Enough For Trump To Build Border Wall

By Serena Marshall , Ben Siegel

ABC News, January 26, 2017

One of President Trump's leading campaign promises was to build "a wall" along the southern border of the United States to stem the flow of undocumented immigrants, and he started the process Wednesday during a visit to the Department of Homeland Security.

Trump signed an executive order to, as press secretary Sean Spicer explained during a briefing Wednesday, begin the building of a "large physical barrier" along the U.S.-Mexican border.

Spicer re-emphasized that "yes, one way or another, as the president has said before, Mexico will pay for it," though offering no specifics on how it would be funded in the meantime.

For his part, Trump said in remarks at DHS Wednesday, "We are going to save lives on both sides of the border, and we also understand that a strong and healthy economy in Mexico is very good for the United States."

The president also told ABC News Wednesday in his first one-on-one television interview since being sworn in that U.S. taxpayer dollars would be used to start the construction of the wall after negotiations between the United States and Mexico begin "relatively soon."

But still at issue is whether Trump's executive authority is enough to move the proposed project forward. Here are some key questions to consider:

Can He Get It Done?

One of the first questions to ponder is whether he can legally build a wall? Yes, though most likely only if he can get Congress to pay for it.

But Trump has decided to begin the process on his own, signing two executive orders Wednesday that would increase the number of border patrol enforcement officers and lay the groundwork for building his proposed wall along unspecified portions of the 2,000-mile border with Mexico.

To that end, the Trump administration and GOP leaders are invoking a 2006 law – the Secure Fence Act – that authorized about 700 miles of fencing along the southern border. The goal of that law, with support from Democrats like then-Sen. Hillary Clinton and Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, was to keep pedestrians and vehicles from crossing.

Then-President George W. Bush signed the measure after Congress approved it, and various kinds of fencing have since been constructed in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

Why Does He Need Congress?

President Trump has ordered the Department of Homeland Security to review its $41 billion annual budget and move funds within the organization to help fund the border wall effort. The House and Senate appropriations committees would have to approve any reallocation of funding internally.

"The department [of Homeland Security] can move money around to some degree; small amounts within individual agencies have reprogramming limits set in place by specific reappropriation committees," Kenneth Gold, director of the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University, said.

But because the wall is expected to cost billions of dollars, it's more than likely that the White House will need additional money, which means the administration will have to ask Congress for it.

"The whole purpose of the appropriations clause of the Constitution is to place limits on what the president can do on his own," Gold said. "Presidents cannot simply decide to obligate funds that Congress has not appropriated money for."

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., today said Congress will approve funding for the wall in a supplemental appropriations bill, which he and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky estimate will cost between $12 to $15 billion.

"We intend to address the wall issue ourselves and the president can deal with his relations with other countries on that issue and others," McConnell told reporters today at the GOP policy retreat in Philadelphia.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., in response to Trump's orders, Wednesday said in a statement, "With today's sweeping and constitutionally suspect executive actions, the president is turning his back on both our history and our values as a proud nation of immigrants," and "wasting billions of taxpayer dollars on a border wall Mexico will never pay for."

How Would He Pay for It?

Trump said he envisions U.S. taxpayers' paying upfront, and then being reimbursed by Mexico for the wall, which he has estimated could cost from $8 billion to $ 12 billon.

Whatever the cost, he told ABC News' David Muir Wednesday, "We will be reimbursed at a later date from whatever transaction we make, from Mexico,"

Mexican officials, who canceled an upcoming scheduled meeting with Trump in protest, have repeatedly said they will not pay.

"I regret and reject the decision of the United States to continue building a wall that, that for years, far from uniting us, divides us," Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto said in a taped message Wednesday. "Mexico does not believe in walls."

Trump said today that he and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto "agreed" to cancel their planned meeting in the United States next week.

For comparison, the portion of the 700 miles of fencing built in 2007, under the Secure Fence Act of 2006 signed by President Bush, was estimated to cost about $2.8 million a mile, according to the Congressional Research Service in a 2009 report to Congress.

It was also constructed using mostly the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the National Guard. The report also found "fencing constructed in FY2008, using mostly private constructors, cost about $5.1 million a mile."

According to an analysis published in the MIT Technology Review, building a new 1,000-mile wall could cost as much as $40 billion. Their breakdown includes the current price of steel and concrete.

Trump has said he doesn't need a wall to extend the entire length of the 2,000-mile border. "We need 1,000 because we have natural barriers … and I'm taking it price per square foot and a price per square, you know, per mile," he told MSNBC last February.

But there are also costs associated with maintenance and upkeep.

"The Corps of Engineers also predicted that the 25-year, life-cycle cost of the fence [authorized in 2006] would range from $16.4 million to $70 million per mile depending on the amount of damage sustained by the fencing," according to the 2009 Congressional Research Service report

This means that without Congress' involvement, Trump likely wouldn't have the funds not only to build the wall, but maintain it for years to come.

Would a Wall Even Work?

There are about 700 miles of U.S.-Mexico border fencing, officials note.

And Border Patrol already employs a "digital wall" with roughly 8,000 cameras monitoring the southern fence, ports of entry and watching above from helium balloons.

It also has resources that include more than 11,000 underground sensors, 107 aircraft, eight drones, 175 mobile surveillance units and 84 boats, allowing them, in Customs and Border Protection's words, to monitor the border closer and more effectively.

"We can spend billions of dollars, to build a 10-foot wall on top of a 10,000-foot mountain," former DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson said in a November speech, "but if you've come all the way from Central America, it's not going to stop you."

Trump's Border Wall Faces Reality Check

By ANDREW TAYLOR, ALICIA CALDWELL

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – President Donald Trump's vow to accelerate construction of a "contiguous, physical wall" along the Mexican border is slamming into a Washington reality – who's going to pay for it and how?

Not us, say the Mexicans.

Instead, U.S. taxpayers will foot the bill, starting with money already in the Department of Homeland Security account that amounts to a small down payment. Then it's up to the Republican-led Congress to come up with $12 billion to $15 billion more, according to an estimate offered by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., on Thursday from a GOP issues retreat in Philadelphia.

GOP leaders refused to commit to paying for the wall with spending cuts elsewhere in the budget. That could mean costs would be paid for by adding to the government's $20 trillion debt. Press Secretary Sean Spicer Thursday floated the idea of a 20 percent tariff on Mexican imports.

On Wednesday, Trump promised "immediate construction" would begin on the border wall, telling ABC News that planning is starting immediately. He again vowed that Mexico would pay the U.S. back, though he offered no details.

It is true there is a small amount available now in the Department of Homeland Security accounts dedicated to "border security fencing, infrastructure, and technology" – $100 million, by one congressional estimate – that would permit work to get immediately under way.

So far, thanks to spending in the late 2000s, Congress has provided about $2.3 billion to construct 654 miles of fencing and vehicular blockades. But Trump has promised a wall, not just fencing, and it's not a universally popular idea by any stretch.

"The facts have not changed. Building a wall is the most expensive and least effective way to secure the border," said GOP Rep. Will Hurd, whose sprawling West Texas swing district encompasses more than 800 miles of the border. "Many areas in my district are perfect examples of where a wall is unnecessary and would negatively impact the environment, private property rights and economy."

GOP members of the appropriations committees are more likely to take a green eyeshade approach to the money since they are familiar with the likely trade-offs.

"There's any number of complications," said Rep. Harold Rogers, R-Ky., former House Appropriations Committee Chairman, citing obstacles such as Indian reservations and national parks and forests. And much of the remaining 1,300 miles is very rough terrain, with steep

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construction costs and a limited return for the dollar. "It's expensive and it's complicated."

Hundreds of miles of the border are so rugged and inhospitable that it doesn't make sense to even try to build.

And in Texas, almost all of the land along the border is privately owned. When former President George W. Bush tried to build border fencing starting in 2006, he faced stiff opposition from local ranchers and farmers, many of whom took the government to court on plans to use their land.

In many areas along the Rio Grande the fencing is built well inside the United States, as far as a mile north of the Rio Grande, to ensure that the structure doesn't interfere with the flow of the river or is built on solid ground. The middle of the channel marks the internal border and a 1970 treaty with Mexico requires that structures built there not interfere with water flow.

"We have built a fence along the border almost as much as we possibly can without violating tribal laws, environmental requirements, and taking over peoples' personal, private property," said Michelle Mrdeza, who worked for the House Appropriations panel during the fence debate of the mid-2000s.

The existing blockade – roughly 350 miles to block pedestrians and 300 miles to block vehicles – has already been built along the southern border. That fencing was built in the areas that are most vulnerable to illegal crossings.

"Insofar as the problem is a physical barrier, we've basically addressed that issue," said Rep. David Price, D-N.C., who chaired the congressional panel that funded the border fence when Democrats controlled Congress. "This focus, this fixation on a wall and pouring untold billions of dollars into a wall, is foolishness."

Cost estimates prepared a decade ago already varied widely. A 2009 Government Accountability Office analysis put costs at $6.5 million a mile for pedestrian fencing and $1.8 million per mile for vehicular blockades. An actual wall constructed of concrete and steel would be more costly and difficult.

Trump has repeatedly promised that Mexico will pay for his wall, though neither he nor his allies in Congress are able to articulate how. The president of Mexico is emphatic that his country will not pick up the tab.

"I regret and reject the decision of the U.S. to build the wall," Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto said Wednesday in a nationally televised address in his country. "I have said time and again, Mexico will not pay for any wall."

Already, U.S. agencies have been told to scrub their budgets for savings that could be used for the wall.

"These taxpayer dollars would be better spent on investing ... to find cures for cancer and other diseases, spending on hospitals and doctors to care for our veterans, helping communities with clean water investments, supporting police in our communities," said Sen. Pat Leahy, D-Vt.

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Congress Scrambles To Make Sense Of Trump Plan To Tax Mexico To Pay For Border Wall

By Kelsey Snell

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

Lawmakers in Congress scrambled Thursday to try to make sense of news that President Donald Trump wants to use a 20 percent tax on goods imported from Mexico to pay for the cost of constructing wall on the Southern border.

"We're working on a tax reform bill that will reduce our trade deficits, increase American exports and will generate revenue from Mexico that will pay for the wall if we decide to go that route," Trump announced at a GOP policy retreat in Philadelphia.

Cheers immediately rang out from House Republicans because it seemed like Trump was referring to their idea to tax all imports at a rate of 20 percent and exempt exports from tax entirely. Trump seemed to dismiss that same plan, known as "border adjustment," earlier this month when he told the Wall Street Journal that the idea was "too complicated."

Such a stunning change in tax policy would need buy-in from a wide range of lawmakers on the Capitol Hill, most of whom spent Thursday just trying to figure out what exactly Trump wants the tax policy to include.

House Republican leaders and their staff rushed to say that it was clear Trump was embracing their entire border adjustment idea.

"We have been and continue to be on the same page about tax reform that supports American jobs and American goods," said AshLee Strong, a spokeswoman for House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis).

Members of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee insisted Trump was on their side.

"What he's referring to is border adjustment,"said Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), a senior member on Ways and Means.

Then things got complicated. White House spokesman Sean Spicer told reporters traveling back to Washington from Philadelphia that Trump supports using the tax to raise around $10 billion per year to offset the cost of building a wall with Mexico. He didn't mention the rest of the border adjustment plan.

"When you look at the plan that's taking shape now, using comprehensive tax reform as a means to tax imports from countries that we have a trade deficit from, like Mexico," Spicer said.

That all changed later when Spicer said the idea was just one of many options on the table.

"The idea is to show that generating revenue for the wall is not as difficult as some might have suggested," Spicer later told reporters. "The idea today wasn't rolling it out or being prescriptive or announce anything, it's to say hey look, it's not that hard to do."

Several GOP aides said they were confused because Trump's statement was so vague. Most declined to comment on the proposal because they simply didn't know if Trump was advocating for a tariff on goods from Mexico or if he supports the House GOP idea.

The system of taxing all imports is often confused with a tariff because both systems effectively drive up the price of imports. The difference is in how the two ideas are executed. A tariff is a punitive fee on specific imports and a border tax is a tax exclusion for exports. Republicans say their idea acts as an incentive for companies to buy U.S.-made goods.

Critics argue that either way, consumers are the ones who ultimately pay the price when stores like Walmart that sell millions of imported goods increase prices to make up for the new higher taxes.

Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), who chairs the Freedom Caucus, a group of a conservative House members, didn't endorse the idea when asked about it — but didn't fully reject it either.

"We have to explore a number of options on how to pay for that. You know, generally speaking, I'm against tariffs," said Meadows. "You know, I look at it from an economic standpoint. At the same time, I don't want to hamstring the administration in things they are willing to explore."

Analysis: Trump's Border Wall Faces Reality Check

By Andrew Taylor And Alicia Caldwell

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

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And in Texas, almost all of the land along the border is privately owned. When former President George W. Bush tried to build border fencing starting in 2006, he faced stiff opposition from local ranchers and farmers, many of whom took the government to court on plans to use their land.

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This story has been corrected to change the day to Wednesday in the fifth paragraph.

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Trump's Wall Met With Skepticism, Unease On US-Mexico Border

By Elliot Spagat And Julie Watson

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

SAN DIEGO (AP) – As President Donald Trump announced his plans for a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico, Border Patrol agents in San Diego on the lookout for drugs and smugglers drove all-terrain vehicles along a barrier that reaches 18 feet, topped by razor wire and reinforced by cameras and lighting.

Mexicans shopped at an outlet mall that bumps up against the border. And dozens of migrants huddled in tents outside a shelter in Mexico hoping to get into the U.S. someday.

To them, Trump's executive order Wednesday to build a wall seemed more like a symbolic and worrisome gesture of a new chapter in U.S-Mexico relations than a real deterrent for people to enter the country illegally.

"Even if they build the wall, I will climb the wall. I bring a ladder the size of the wall, even from sticks or whatever, but I'll make it, and I'll jump over there," said Jos de Jes s Ram rez, a recently deported Mexican migrant whose wife and children are in the U.S.

Ramirez's response echoed the mood along the border that was a combination of resentment, defiance – and business as usual. A crew of laborers was actually building a fence on the border as Trump made his announcement. On a cold morning in the desert, the workers installed concrete blocks on which the 22-foot steel fence will stand between the town of Sunland Park, New Mexico, and Ciudad Juarez in Mexico. The project has been underway for several months.

In Tijuana, a high school student went to a stone monument dedicated by both countries in 1848 as a sign of the friendship between the U.S. and Mexico. The monument once stood on the border but now is in Mexico, a few feet away from a giant wall of towering steel bars that lead into the Pacific Ocean.

The student, 17-year-old Brandon Dzul, said talk of another wall stirred up painful memories of his 34-year-old uncle who died in the desert six years ago after being abandoned by smugglers.

"He just had the American dream, you know, to make a better life," he said. "I think now we aren't going to be able to get in even with a visa."

Nearby, about 150 people gathered in tents outside a 40-bed migrant shelter that has been overwhelmed since May, when large numbers of Haitians began stopping in the Mexican border city on their way to the United States. Many moved to Brazil after Haiti's 2010 earthquake and went north after jobs dried up in the South American country.

Haitians generally turn themselves in to U.S. inspectors at San Diego's San Ysidro port of entry, the nation's busiest crossing, making no attempt to jump the fence or evade authorities. They were released on humanitarian parole until September, when the U.S. ended special treatment for Haitians and began deporting them just as they do people from other countries.

U.S. authorities lack resources to process Haitians quickly enough, leading Mexican authorities to create a ticketing system that leaves them waiting in Tijuana for

weeks. Migrant shelters are full, forcing many to sleep on the streets.

Fences and other barriers already blanket about 700 miles of border, much of it in California and Arizona. In San Diego, they helped to virtually shut down what was the busiest corridor for illegal crossings in the 1990s. It's now one of the most fortified stretches of landscape on the 2,000-mile divide between the two countries.

Border Patrol sector chiefs were asked in November to identify areas where the fence could be expanded, though Trump and his advisers have yet to detail their next steps. Brandon Judd, president of the National Border Patrol Council and a member of Trump's transition team, supports building a wall in strategic locations and reinforcing existing barriers in certain areas but not where there are natural obstacles, like the Rio Grande river in Texas.

"We do not need a Great Wall of China from California to Texas," Judd said in an interview last week.

Away from the border, Trump drew support from his base. Tammy Allen, a 52-year-old supporter who splits time between Florida and Virginia, applauded Trump's interest in curbing the number of refugees coming to the U.S. and building a wall.

"A lot of countries do. Why not us? Something has got to be done," she said.

Associated Press writer Michael Kunzelman in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

This story has been corrected to show that Trump supporter Tammy Allen splits time between Florida and Virginia and isn't from Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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Conway On Border: It's Time We Spent Money 'Protecting Our Own'

By Louis Nelson

Politico, January 26, 2017

Despite repeated promises to the contrary from Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, counselor to the president Kellyanne Conway said Thursday morning that Mexico will foot the bill for her boss's promised border wall.

But Conway, appearing on NBC's "Today" also said that it is "high time" that the U.S. spend money protecting its own border.

"President Trump has been very clear and consistent on this point, Matt. He's going to build the wall, Mexico will pay for it. Whether they pay for it straight-out, or it's reimbursed later on after congressional funding," Conway told NBC host Matt Lauer. "It's about being a sovereign nation. The United States of America spends billions of dollars protecting other countries' borders. It's high time we spend some money protecting our own."

Conway's comments came one day after President Donald Trump signed a pair of executive orders aimed at fulfilling the hardline promises he made on immigration during the campaign. Included in those orders was a provision to initiate the construction of a "physical barrier" along America's southern border with Mexico, as well as increased resources for border enforcement and directions to strip federal funding from so-called "sanctuary" states and cities that harbor undocumented immigrants.

Throughout the campaign, Trump promised that Mexico would pay for the wall but since winning last year's presidential election, he has begun saying that U.S. taxpayers would fund the project for the sake of expediency and then be paid back by Mexico. In an interview that aired Wednesday evening, Trump told ABC News anchor David Muir that payment from Mexico "will be in a form, perhaps a complicated form."

Conway declined to elaborate during her "Today" show appearance what "complicated" form the payment from Mexico might take, telling Lauer that she understood what Trump was referring to but would not clarify because the president "wants to give the deference to his meeting with the Mexican president and other Mexican officials before he announces that."

"I mean, welcome to Washington," she said. "It's hardly breaking news to talk about the complication of funding new projects. And that's what this is."

10 Huge Flaws In Trump's Immigration Directives

By Jennifer Rubin

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

One hardly knows where to begin in describing the flaws in the batch of immigration actions President Trump announced on Wednesday. Here are 10 for starters:

1. This is more hysteria unrelated to actual border conditions. As the Wall Street Journal editorial board put it, "Border apprehensions were 192,000 last year, but that's down from 981,000 a decade ago. Pew estimates that about 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants live in the U.S. (3.5% of the population), and 52% are Mexicans. That share is falling every year amid rising illegal entries from Asia, Central America and sub-Saharan Africa. Most of these aliens arrive

legally but overstay their visas." This is an expensive, counterproductive agenda in search of a problem.

2. The terrain of much of the border is not conducive to fencing.

3. Trump's obsession with the southern border and relative indifference to visa overstays suggests a bias against certain illegal immigrants. Trump thinks Mexican immigrants are "killers" and "criminals," while apparently never having used such invective against other illegal immigrant groups.

4. A physical wall is duplicative, ineffective and unnecessary. Cato Institute scholar David Bier explains that we have more than 600 miles of border fencing already. Moreover, "Tunnels are typically used more for drug smuggling, but they are still a serious vulnerability in any kind of physical barrier." Walls can be defeated by ladders and ramps. Zero evidence exists that a wall is a cost-effective means of stemming illegal entry. ("Despite the importance of this question, apparently no estimate of the impact of the current border fence on illegal immigration exists at all, let alone a comparison to other technologies. This is despite more than a decade to conduct such a study for the recent fences, and even longer to study the earlier fences.")

5. This is a boondoggle of the worst sort. "For the full 1,000 miles, Trump's 30-foot wall (with a 10-foot tunnel barrier) would cost $31.2 billion, according to the best estimate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology engineers—that is $31.2 million per mile," as Bier notes.

6. Building a wall will be a huge expansion of federal power and land, reinforcing Republicans' long-standing complaints that the feds gobble up too much state land.

7. Trump actually is making apprehension and deportation of criminals harder. The Obama administration already prioritized deportation of violent criminals. An immigration lawyer explained to me that contrary to the Obama administration, the Trump order "prioritizes nearly everything." He points out, "Labeling every person a 'priority' is like highlighting every word in a textbook." Since resources are finite, Trump increases the chances that a truly violent criminal won't be deported. When those people commit new crimes, Trump's scattershot policy will be partly to blame.

8. There is no way Mexico is going to pay for the wall. Trump's statement that U.S. taxpayers wouldn't pay the cost has morphed into a word salad. "Ultimately, it will come out of what's happening with Mexico," Trump told ABC's David Muir. "We're going to be starting those negotiations relatively soon, and we will be in a form reimbursed by Mexico." We have no idea what this means.

9. The notion of a "sanctuary city" is a misnomer. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are free to apprehend individuals wherever they want. We are talking about the extent to which local law enforcement can be required to devote resources (e.g. hold illegal immigrants in jails) and whether, for example, it demands a warrant from the feds. Who is going to monitor and decide whether the cities are living up to the requirements? What if the federal government and cities disagree on whether the local authorities are being sufficiently cooperative?

10. If the federal government cuts off aid to cities, shortfalls in everything from schools to roads to anti-poverty programs to health care (what about Medicaid costs for people in those cities?) will be attributable to Trump's policy. When people "die on the streets" or shootings increase in a city, there will be a convenient person to blame: Trump.

There are dozens of other reasons not to pursue these policies, including the damage it will do to relations with Mexico. Whatever you think about illegal immigration, Trump's approach — like much of what he does — makes for good PR with his base but is rotten policy for the United States.

Mexican President Cancels Planned DC Meeting With Trump

By Mark Stevenson

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

MEXICO CITY (AP) – Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto canceled a planned Tuesday meeting with President Donald J. Trump on Thursday, signaling a remarkable souring of relations between Washington and one of its most important international partners just days into the new administration.

The rift capped days of increasingly confrontational remarks – on Twitter and in dueling public appearances – between the two men, whose countries conduct some $1.6 billion a day in cross-border trade, and cooperate on everything from migration to anti-drug enforcement to environmental issues.

Hours after Trump tweeted that the meeting should be scrapped if Mexico doesn't agree to pay for a wall along the nearly 2,000-mile border, Pena Nieto responded via the same platform.

"This morning we have informed the White House I will not attend the working meeting planned for next Tuesday," the Mexican president tweeted. He added that "Mexico reaffirms its willingness to work with the United States to reach agreements that benefit both nations."

In a speech later Thursday, Trump doubled down on the dispute, saying that "unless Mexico is going to treat the United States fairly, with respect, such a meeting would be fruitless, and I want to go a different route. We have no choice."

Trump also claimed that calling off the meeting was a mutual decision and floated a new possible threat to Mexico, which sends about 80 percent of its exports to the U.S. and which has vowed not to pay for a wall.

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"We're working on a tax reform bill that will reduce our trade deficit, increase American exports and will generate revenue from Mexico that will pay for the wall, if we decide to go that route," Trump said.

His spokesman later said Trump was calling for a 20 percent tax on imports to pay for the southern wall.

He has also pledged to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada.

"I will not allow the citizens or the taxpayers of the United States to pay the cost of this defective transaction, NAFTA, one that should have been renegotiated many years ago, except that the politicians were too preoccupied to do so," Trump said.

Mexican officials have expressed willingness to update the pact, but said they would consider walking away from NAFTA if negotiations mean making too many concessions.

Mexico is one of America's biggest trade partners, and the U.S. is the No. 1 buyer from Mexico, accounting for about 80 percent of Mexican exports. A complete rupture in ties could be damaging to the U.S. economy, an disastrous for Mexico's

"Today's events are dangerous for the immediate and long-term security and economy of the United States," Jason Marczak of the Atlantic Council wrote. "U.S.-Mexico cooperation is far-reaching: from intelligence sharing for the capture of drug traffickers to the flow of commercial goods that support the livelihoods of nearly 5 million American workers."

White House press secretary Sean Spicer later responded to the Mexican president's tweet, saying: "We'll look for a date to schedule something in the future. We will keep the lines of communication open."

Pena Nieto's decision ended days of uncertainty about how he would respond to Trump's aggressive stance toward the country, and illustrated the challenges world leaders are likely to face in dealing with the U.S. president's voluble, Twitter-based diplomacy.

The diplomatic row also recalls the rocky days of U.S.-Mexico relations in the 1980s, prior to NAFTA.

"There is a change in the understanding that had been in operation over the last 22 years, when Mexico was considered a strategic ally," said Isidro Morales, a political scientist at the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education. "Trump has unilaterally broken with this way of doing things."

Mexico had tried its traditional approach of quiet, cautious diplomacy combined with back-room discussions, sending Cabinet officials for talks with the Trump administration. But that changed when Trump decided to announce his border wall on the same day that two senior Mexican Cabinet ministers – Foreign Relations Secretary Luis Videgaray and Economy Secretary Ildefonso Guajardo – arrived in Washington for preliminary talks ahead of what was to be a presidential tete-a-tete. Many were affronted by the timing, and Pena Nieto faced a firestorm of criticism at home.

That evening Pena Nieto issued recorded remarks suggesting he was reconsidering his upcoming trip to Washington. On Thursday morning, Trump tweeted: "If Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel."

The president had "no other choice but to say 'I'm not going,'" former foreign relations secretary Jorge Castaneda told Mexican media.

Already deeply unpopular at home with historic-low approval ratings, Pena Nieto had come under increasing pressure to stand up to Trump.

Mexico's best-known opposition politician, leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, tweeted that "in the face of Trump's latest outburst, don't go to the meeting, and submit an urgent complaint to the U.N. for human rights violations."

Many Mexicans said Thursday that they backed Pena Nieto's decision to scrap the trip.

Magda Hoffmann, a Mexico City retiree, called Trump's behavior "insulting and rude."

"As my grandmother said," she added, "'Don't go where you're not invited.'"

Like many, she found the conduct of diplomacy-by-tweets to be odd.

"This is a diplomatic relationship here. I'm sorry, gentlemen, but that has to be given value," Hoffman said. "It's not a question to be handled ... text-messaging back and forth."

Orlando Contreras, a 35-year-old computer engineer in the capital, said he believed Pena Nieto had no reason to "negotiate under their conditions."

"I feel that we have always been under their (the U.S.) yoke," Contreras said. "I think it would be a good thing to separate ourselves from them, so Mexico can strike out on its own."

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Mexico's President Cancels Meeting With Trump Over Wall

By Azam Ahmed

New York Times, January 26, 2017

MEXICO CITY — President Donald J. Trump's decision to build a wall along the southern border escalated into a diplomatic standoff on Thursday, with Mexico's president publicly canceling a scheduled meeting at the White House and Mr. Trump firing back, accusing Mexico of burdening the United States with illegal immigrants, criminals and a trade deficit.

Mr. Trump's push to fulfill his campaign pledge and build a border wall brought to a head months of simmering tensions, culminating in a remarkable back-and-forth between the two leaders.

By afternoon, Mr. Trump's spokesman said the president would pay for the border wall by imposing a 20 percent tax on imports to the United States, which he said would raise billions of dollars.

The sparring began Thursday morning when the president of Mexico announced on Twitter that he was canceling his meeting with Mr. Trump next week, rejecting the visit after the new American leader ordered the border wall between the two nations.

Having called for dialogue in the face of Mr. Trump's vows to build a wall during the American presidential campaign, Mr. Peña Nieto ultimately bowed to public pressure in Mexico to respond more forcefully to his northern neighbor.

On Wednesday, Mr. Trump signed an executive order to beef up the nation's deportation force and start construction on a new wall along the border. Adding to the perceived insult was the timing of the order: It came on the first day of talks between top Mexican officials and their counterparts in Washington, and just days before the meeting between the two presidents.

Mr. Trump's action was enough to prompt Mr. Peña Nieto to start discussing whether to scrap his plans to visit the White House, according to Mexican officials. In a video message delivered over Twitter on Wednesday night, Mr. Peña Nieto reiterated his commitment to protect the interests of Mexico and the Mexican people, and he chided the move in Washington to continue with the wall.

"I regret and condemn the United States' decision to continue with the construction of a wall that, for years now, far from uniting us, divides us," he said.

Then on Thursday morning, Mr. Trump fired back, warning that he might cancel the meeting himself if Mexico did not agree to pay for the wall.

Just before Mr. Trump fired off his Twitter post, the Mexican foreign minister and Mr. Trump's Homeland Security secretary, John F. Kelly, were preparing to see each other for a scheduled 11:30 a.m. meeting.

According to a senior American official, the secretary had been briefed. The appropriate flags had been arranged by the protocol staff at the Department of Homeland Security. Then, just as American officials greeted the minister outside the department's headquarters in Northwest Washington, the minister received word from Mexico that he was being pulled back, the official said. The meeting never happened.

By early afternoon, Mr. Trump said it was the United States that was being treated unfairly.

"We have agreed to cancel our planned meeting," Mr. Trump said in a new conference Thursday afternoon. "Unless Mexico is going to treat the U.S. fairly, with respect, such a meeting would be fruitless, and I want to go a different route. We have no choice."

In Mexico, Mr. Peña Nieto had little political room to maneuver. With Mr. Trump's order to build the wall, the perceived insults Mexico had endured during the campaign had finally turned into action. Decades of friendly relations between the nations — on matters involving trade, security and migration — seemed to be unraveling.

Calls began to come in from across the political spectrum for Mr. Peña Nieto to cancel his visit, and to respond with greater fortitude to the perceived menace from President Trump. On Twitter, Mr. Trump's action was referred to by politicians and historians as a "an offense to Mexico," a "slap in the face" and a "monument to lies."

Historians said that not since President Calvin Coolidge threatened to invade a "Soviet Mexico" had the United States so deeply antagonized the Mexican populace.

"It is an unprecedented moment for the bilateral relationship," said Genaro Lozano, a professor at the Iberoamerican University in Mexico City. "In the 19th century, we fought a war with the U.S.; now we find ourselves in a low-intensity war, a commercial one over Nafta and an immigration war due to the measures he just announced."

Not So Fast Nieto: Trump Says Cancelled Meet With Mexico President Was Mutual Decision

By S.A. Miller

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — President Trump said Thursday that he and Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto mutually agreed to call off their meeting scheduled for next week in Washington, making the claim within hours of Mr. Nieto announcing that he wasn't coming.

The meeting derailed over Mr. Trump signing orders Wednesday to begin building a Wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and his insisting that Mexico would pay for it, which Mexican official took as an insult.

"Have agreed to cancel our planned meeting scheduled for next week," Mr. Trump told House and Senate Republicans at a strategy retreat in Philadelphia. "Such a meeting would be fruitless."

"There will be a wall," said Mr. Trump

Mr. Trump said that Americans needed a president who would stand up for them the say presidents in other countries stand up for their citizens.

"The world has taken advantage of us for many years. It's not going to happen anymore," said Mr. Trump.

Under pressure from Mexican lawmakers to back out of the meeting, Mr. Nieto said that he remains firm in his refusal to pay for the wall.

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Early Thursday morning Mr. Trump said that if Mexico was unwilling to talk about paying for the wall, then Mr. Pena Nieto should follow through on his threat to cancel the meeting.

Mr. Nieto later said on Twitter that the meeting was off.

Brushing aside the run-in with Mr. Nieto, the president said that he also planned to make good on his promise to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he has labeled a "bad deal" that shipped U.S. manufacturing jobs south of the border.

"I made clear to the government of Mexico that NAFTA has been a terrible deal, a total disaster for the United States from the inception," he said. "It's costing us as much as $60 billion a year from Mexico alone in a trade deficit."

"You say, 'Who negotiates these deals,'" he asked.

He said that Americans have known for years that NAFTA was a bad deal that needed to be renegotiated "except the politicians were too preoccupied to do so." He then said that didn't apply to the politicians gathered in the room.

"Unless Mexico is going to treat the United States fairly with respect, such a meeting would be fruitless and I want to go a different route. We have no choice," said Mr. Trump.

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Trump Says Meeting With Mexican President Would Have Been 'Fruitless'

By Michael A. Memoli

Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump cast the cancellation of a meeting with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto as a mutual decision Thursday, saying the summit would have been "fruitless" unless Mexico demonstrated it would "treat the United States fairly" and "with respect."

The scheduled summit had been billed as a chance for Trump and Peña Nieto to start discussions on the North American Free Trade Agreement and immigration, both Trump priorities. But it was Trump's continued insistence that Mexico reimburse the U.S. for construction of a new border wall that prompted Peña Nieto to skip the visit.

Trump said that he and Peña Nieto had agreed to cancel the meeting, but Peña Nieto tweeted that Mexican officials had informed the White House that he would not be attending.

"Unless Mexico is going to treat the United States fairly, with respect, such a meeting would be fruitless," Trump said. "And I want to go a different route."

Speaking in Philadelphia to congressional Republicans, Trump called border security a "serious, serious national issue."

"The American people will not pay for the wall," he said. "It is time that the American people had a president fighting as hard for its citizens as other countries do for theirs. And that is exactly what I'm going to do for you."

Trump said he also wouldn't allow taxpayers to lose money because of the "defective transaction" that NAFTA represented.

Without Mexico's agreement to pay for construction of the wall, Trump signaled one possible way to generate revenue without its cooperation: tax legislation that would reduce the trade deficit and increase American exports.

That would be part of a larger legislative agenda that Trump said could make this Republican-led Congress the busiest in decades, or "maybe ever." After summarizing executive actions he's taken already, Trump pointed to other priorities he would seek to move through Congress, starting with the repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

He also called for a major infrastructure plan that would focus on fixing existing roads, bridges and airports before building new ones.

And he telegraphed action he was expected to take later Thursday, ordering an investigation into allegations of voter fraud that he has called a major issue, despite studies showing otherwise.

"We are going to protect the integrity of the ballot box. and we are going to defend the votes of the American citizens," he said.

Trump, an unconventional Republican, urged his party to embrace its heritage as "the party of American industry and the American worker."

"Think of everything we can achieve. And remember who we must achieve it for," he said. "We're here now because tens of millions of Americans have placed their hopes in us to transfer power from Washington, D.C., and give it back to the people. Now we have to deliver."

Trump Lays Groundwork To Change U.S. Role In The World

By Karen Deyoung And Philip Rucker

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

President Trump began this week to reshape the U.S. role in the world, laying the groundwork, in a series of planned and signed executive actions and statements, for the "America first" foreign policy on which he campaigned.

Already, Trump has mandated construction of a border wall with Mexico and a clampdown on local immigration enforcement. Other directives drafted but not yet signed would halt all refu-gee admissions and entry into the United States of citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries deemed terrorist hotbeds; declare a moratorium on new multilateral treaties; and mandate audits of U.S. funding for international organizations, including the United Nations, with

a view toward cutting U.S. voluntary contributions by 40 percent.

Additional pending orders, copies of which were obtained by The Washington Post, call for a review of cyber capabilities and vulnerabilities, in advance of what is expected to be greater use of offensive powers; and direct the Pentagon to quickly develop plans to reduce spending on items not deemed "highest priority," while ramping up programs to expand the armed forces and modernize the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

Another draft order under consideration would direct the State Department to review its designations of foreign terrorist organizations, allowing it to add the Muslim Brotherhood to the list, according to an administration official who was not authorized to discuss it. The group's status as a legitimate political movement vs. a terrorist group is controversial in the Middle East. Such a listing would please some, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, but could anger others, such as Turkey and Qatar.

Trump could sign some of these orders as early as Friday during a scheduled visit to the Pentagon. The White House declined to comment on the directives.

If implemented, these initiatives and other steps Trump has previewed will usher in a new era of American foreign policy, after decades of bipartisan agreement that the United States has a responsibility to spread democracy and stand up for the oppressed, and that it would prosper when a united, free world prospered.

In the policies Trump has outlined, there are no apparent trade-offs to be made that balance short-term American advantage with global goals benefiting the United States over the longer term. Instead, as a policy posted on the White House website on Inauguration Day put it, "The world will be more peaceful and more prosperous with a stronger and more respected America."

"Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs will be made to benefit American workers and American families," Trump said in his inauguration speech. "We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength."

Trump sees himself as the protector of an American fortress and disrupter of a world that is growing more calamitous and dangerous by the day. "The world is a total mess," he said Wednesday in an interview with ABC News.

At times, it is difficult to determine whether he is laying down the law or establishing a negotiating position. Having pushed Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto into a corner on funding the border wall, the administration indicated Thursday that it considered Mexico's cancellation of a presidential visit to Washington a mere postponement.

Kori Schake, a former national security official in the George W. Bush administration who opposed Trump's candidacy, said the executive orders are already causing political damage with U.S. allies. "It's consistent with the way in which President Trump creates chaos and moves blithely on," she said.

Many of Trump's ideas are not new, although they draw from a wide political spectrum. Trump's reimagining of a new 21st-century architecture for world order, including a sharp reduction in U.S. participation in international institutions, has been a rallying cry for conservatives for years.

His words and actions reflect "a view that the status quo that has essentially grown up over the last 70 years costs the U.S. more than it benefits it," said Richard N. Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations and a senior official in the George H.W. Bush administration. That view, extending from trade policy to traditional alliances, Haass said, "is fundamentally flawed in its assumption that American involvement and leadership in the world has cost us more than it's gained us, but that nonetheless appears to be their vision."

The United Nations, with its welter of sometimes obscure sub-organizations, and the platform it often provides for criticism of the United States, has been a long-standing target.

Two of the treaties that Trump's proposed executive order makes particular mention of as forcing adherence to "radical domestic agendas" — the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child — are traditional bull's eyes. Like many other U.N.-generated treaties, they have never been ratified by the United States.

Trump proposes internal high-level committees to examine multilateral treaties, with a view toward leaving them, as well as a 40 percent cut in funding for international organizations whose agendas are "contrary to American interests." It is unclear whether the intent is to cut funds for U.N. activities such as peacekeeping forces- and humanitarian programs, as well as those, already targeted by Trump, that support Palestinians and other groups out of favor with the new administration.

John B. Bellinger III, who served as legal counsel to both the National Security Council and the State Department in the George W. Bush administration, said the treaty examination was based on a "false premise . . . that the United States has become party to numerous multi-lateral treaties that are not in the United States' interest."

There are "many hundreds of multi-lateral treaties that help Americans every day in concrete ways," he said. Without them, "Americans could not have our letters delivered in foreign countries; could not fly over foreign countries or drive on foreign roads using our state driver's licenses; could not have access to a foreign consular official if we are arrested

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abroad; could not have our children returned if abducted by a parent; and could not prevent foreign ships from polluting our waters."

While mandates for building a border wall, boosting immigration law enforcement and barring refugees will take immediate effect, others buy time by establishing committees and reviews.

The draft Pentagon order begins by stating, "It shall be the policy of the United States to pursue Peace Through Strength." It directs Defense Secretary James Mattis to produce a National Defense Strategy — something virtually every administration regularly does — by the beginning of 2018.

There is little apparent controversy in the draft executive order to strengthen cybersecurity, a six-page document that in tone and substance could have been written by the Obama administration. It calls for no bold initiatives but rather for review of areas Trump's predecessor had already scrutinized.

One line in the proposed order appeared to signal that the new administration might want to reorganize agencies or boost legal authorities to better protect the country's civilian government networks and critical infrastructure.

Even as Trump sets direction with executive orders, the White House is trying to exert direct control over policymaking at federal departments and agencies. Although offices in many departments sit empty as Cabinet nominees await confirmation, and sub-Cabinet positions are not yet filled, senior advisers have been deployed from the West Wing as liaisons to some departments, to ensure the work that is being done is in keeping with White House priorities.

Of the suggestion that at least some of Trump's moves so far may be largely symbolic and eventual policies could become more traditional, Schake said, "Oh my God, that's the hopeful interpretation — that he's trying to take rapid symbolic gestures that will please his base and that the policy details can get worked out subsequently when he has a Cabinet in place."

"The downside, of course, is it brings all of the diplomatic and economic downsides of having taken the policy action, even if it's only a symbolic gesture," she said.

Ellen Nakashima, Missy Ryan, Dan Lamothe and Thomas Gibbons-Neff contributed to this report.

Mexican President Scraps Visit With Trump

By Jordan Fabian

The Hill, January 26, 2017

Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto said Thursday he will not attend a planned meeting next week with President Trump.

"This morning we informed the White House that I will not attend the work meeting planned for next Tuesday with @POTUS," Peña Nieto tweeted in announcing the cancellation.

Esta mañana hemos informado a la Casa Blanca que no asistiré a la reunión de trabajo programada para el próximo martes con el @POTUS.— Enrique Peña Nieto (@EPN) January 26, 2017

Speaking to a Republican lawmakers at their retreat in Philadelphia, Trump claimed he and Peña Nieto "agreed to cancel our planned meeting."

"Unless Mexico is going to treat the U.S. fairly, such a meeting would be fruitless," the president said.

The move escalates brewing tensions between the two neighboring countries on hot-button issues such as immigration and trade.

The Mexican leader was irked by Trump's announcement that he plans to move forward with his plan to erect a wall along the U.S. southern border — and eventually force Mexico to foot the bill.

"The U.S. has a 60 billion dollar trade deficit with Mexico," Trump wrote in a series of tweets Thursday morning. "It has been a one-sided deal from the beginning of NAFTA with massive numbers of jobs and companies lost. If Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting."

That prompted Trump to urge Peña Nieto to call off the meeting, scheduled for Jan. 31.

The U.S. has a 60 billion dollar trade deficit with Mexico. It has been a one-sided deal from the beginning of NAFTA with massive numbers...— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) January 26, 2017

of jobs and companies lost. If Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting.— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) January 26, 2017

White House press secretary Sean Spicer told reporters the get-together would be rescheduled.

"We'll look for a date to schedule something in the future," he said.

The budding controversy could lead to economic fallout for both countries.

The value of the Mexican peso plunged after Peña Nieto announced he would call off the meeting.

Mexico is the U.S.'s third-largest trading partner and is the second-largest export market for American-made goods, according to the U.S. Trade Representative.

Democrats slammed Trump over the cancellation, saying he was putting at risk the relationship with an important partner.

"Less than one week after taking office, President Trump is already causing serious damage to one of our most important relationships in the world. U.S. national security depends directly on cooperation with our neighbors," said

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Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.), ranking member of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee in a statement.

And House Foreign Affairs Ranking Member Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) touted cooperation between the two countries, and accused Trump of putting "our own security at risk."

"The January 19th extradition of drug kingpin Chapo Guzmán to New York was a major victory for the Obama and Peña Nieto Administrations that never would have been possible without a robust U.S.-Mexico partnership," Engel said.

The tensions with Mexico come after Trump on Wednesday signed two executive orders on immigration, one ordering construction of a border wall.

As Trump announced the moves at the Department of Homeland Security, top administration officials were meeting at the White House with two of Peña Nieto's cabinet secretaries.

The orders prompted Peña Nieto to release a video in which he said the 50 Mexican consulates in the U.S. would "become authentic defenders of the rights of migrants."

Peña Nieto, whose approval rating is currently 12 percent, faced calls to cancel the trip Wednesday night from politicians in Mexico, who saw Trump's wall announcement as a slight.

The pressure intensified Thursday morning as Mexicans woke up to Trump's tweets.

Margarita Zavala, a top contender for the presidency in the upcoming 2018 elections and wife of former President Felipe Calderon, called the tweets a "humiliation."

"The vacuum that @EPN left yesterday was filled today by @realDonaldTrump with yet another humiliation. We require firmness and to put #MexicoFirst," she tweeted.

Historian Enrique Krauze took a different tone, saying patience would be rewarded in dealing with Trump.

"Trump is demented and he will probably destroy himself. We must win time with patience, strength and dignity," Reforma newspaper quoted Krauze as saying.

The two leaders' political fates have been intertwined since August, when Trump visited Peña Nieto mid-campaign in Mexico City. That visit cost then-Secretary of Finance Luis Videgaray his job, amid perceptions that he played a key role in arranging it.

The visit was allegedly arranged through a mutual friend of Videgaray and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and now a White House advisor.

Videgaray returned to the cabinet, this time as Foreign Relations secretary, after Trump's November victory, vowing to take the lead in U.S.-Mexico relations.

Videgaray was, along with Secretary of the Economy Ildefonso Guajardo, one of the officials meeting White House officials Wednesday and Thursday.

Rafael Bernal contributed.

– Updated at 1:08 p.m.

Outraged Mexicans Back Peña Nieto's Decision To Scrap Visit With 'Bully' Trump

By David Agren

USA Today, January 26, 2017

MEXICO CITY — Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto canceled next week's meeting with President Trump at the White House just hours after the American president issued an ultimatum that Mexico scrap the visit if it won't pay for a wall he plans to build along the U.S -Mexican border.

Under pressure from outraged citizens to stand up to Trump, Peña Nieto tweeted on Thursday, "This morning we have informed the White House that I will not attend the meeting scheduled for next Tuesday with the @POTUS."

Peña Nieto made the decision after Mexicans lashed out at Trump, calling the president a bully and self-indulgent and vowing not be be pushed around by him.

In a pair of Thursday morning tweets, Trump accused Mexico of unfair trade with the United States and told Peña Nieto to stay home if Mexico won't pay to build a wall and other barriers along the full 2,000-mile border between the two countries, a massive project estimated to cost billions.

That seemed to suit Mexicans just fine, as they urged Peña Nieto to cancel the trip.

Peña Nieto posted a short video Wednesday night, saying Mexico would not pay for the wall and that the Foreign Ministry would step up its defense of Mexican migrants living in the U.S.

"I regret and reject the decision of the U.S. to build the wall," Peña Nieto said. He added though, "Mexico reaffirms its friendship with the people of the United States and its willingness to reach agreements with its government."

Others reacted to Trump with far greater fury on Thursday.

"Donald, don't be self-indulgent. Mexico has spoken, we will never ever pay for the #(expletive) Wall," former Mexican president Vicente Fox tweeted in response to Trump's tweet.

"It's inadmissible the treatment that @realDonaldTrump is giving Mexico. The response to his irresponsible actions should be firm. #SinMuros [No walls,]" tweeted 2012 presidential candidate Josefina Vázquez Mota.

"After this, if (Foreign Minister) Luis Videgaray and (Economy Minister) Ildefonso Guajardo don't get up from the table and leave, we're lost," said political analyst Fernando Dworak, referring to the two cabinet members currently in Washington. "If we don't do anything today, we deserve even more."

Trump pummeled Mexico during his presidential campaign, repeatedly accusing the U.S. neighbor of unfair trade and allowing criminals into the United States. He also scolded U.S. automakers for moving plants to Mexico.

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"The U.S. has a 60 billion dollar trade deficit with Mexico. It has been a one-sided deal from the beginning of NAFTA with massive numbers..." Trump tweeted Thursday.

"… of jobs and companies lost. If Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting," Trump said in a second tweet.

On Wednesday, Trump signed an executive order calling for construction of a border wall.

Analyst Dworak criticized Peña Nieto, whose approval rating registers just 12%, for failing to stand up to Trump.

"There's a national crisis and we have a political class that's over their heads and unable to articulate a discourse or vision," Dworak said. "For them, it's enough to get out of the way and pretend to play the part of patriot."

Many Mexicans reacted with surprise when Trump officially ordered construction of the wall because they had considered the proposal mere campaign talk by an underdog to win the U.S. presidential election. Some suggested boycotting U.S. brands — "Adiós Starbucks" trended on Twitter — in a country with strong pro-American sentiment since NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, was enacted in 1994.

Foreign Minister Videgaray told the Televisa network that his talks at the White House on Wednesday were "a very positive start to conversations about very substantial topics."

Peña Nieto appointed Videgaray to the diplomatic post in early January, just four months after Videgaray resigned as finance minister because he had lobbied for Peña Nieto to invite candidate Trump to Mexico City in August for an ill-fated meeting in the president palace. The encounter drew complaints from Mexicans that their leader didn't react forcefully to a man who has denigrated them as a country and people.

"For the second time in four months, Videgaray should resign. It's clear there isn't a valid interlocutor with the Trump government," said Esteban Illades, editor of the Mexican magazine Nexos.

"Look at the results: (Videgaray) spent eight hours in the White House yesterday and in return he got a tweet saying that the only way the presidents will talk is if there is payment agreed on the wall."

Peña Nieto's decision won praise though most Mexicans wondered why he seemed to dither before reacting.

"It's too late, but at least it's something. He didn't have any other option left," Illades said. "He knew he wouldn't be able to take on Trump in Washington. And that last [Trump] tweet was the final coffin."

Mexico's President Cancels Planned D.C. Trip To Meet With Trump : The Two-Way : NPR

By Merrit Kennedy

NPR, January 26, 2017

President Trump said on Twitter this morning that "if Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting" with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto.

Hours later, Peña Nieto did just that. His spokesman tells NPR's Carrie Kahn in Mexico City that the president has cancelled Tuesday's visit to Washington D.C., without elaborating.

Trump signed an executive order Wednesday that moves ahead with his plan to build a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico — a policy he described as one in partnership with Mexico and from which both countries will benefit.

But as Carrie reports, Mexico's leader released a video later that night in which he forcefully condemned Trump's plan, calling it divisive. "I have repeatedly said, 'Mexico will not pay for a wall,' " Peña Nieto said.

In the video, Peña Nieto had stopped short of cancelling his trip, saying he was still waiting to hear the latest from his negotiators in Washington. And as Carrie reports, he was under significant pressure from lawmakers to scrap the visit.

"We will look for a date to schedule something in the future," White House press secretary Sean Spicer told reporters after Peña Nieto cancelled. "We will keep the lines of communication open."

Congress Will Consider Up To $15 Billion For Border Wall, GOP Leaders Say

By Erin Kelly

USA Today, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — Congressional leaders said Thursday they expect the Trump administration to send them a request soon for $12 billion to $15 billion to fund construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

It was the first time that Republican leaders have provided a price tag for the wall.

"We intend to address the wall issue ourselves," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., told reporters on the second day of a three-day retreat for congressional Republicans.

Congress will take up President Trump's expected request before the end of September, when fiscal 2017 ends, said House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis. It will be in the form of an emergency budget request, meaning that it will not be part of the regular spending bill to fund the government from April 28 through September. Current funding for federal agencies is set to expire on April 28 under a temporary spending bill passed last week.

If funding for the wall was part of the broader spending bill that Congress must pass in April, it could conceivably lead to a government shutdown since Democrats will oppose it.

Ryan said the funding request will allow Congress to finally carry out the Secure Fence Act, which lawmakers passed in 2006 to construct a series of fences and walls along the Southwest border.

"Now we're actually going to deploy this fence," Ryan said.

Trump had campaigned on a promise to build the border wall and make Mexico pay for it. He is now saying that Mexico will reimburse U.S. taxpayers for the cost, despite assertions by Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto that his country will not pick up the tab.

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Democrats said a wall can't take the place of comprehensive immigration reform that includes border security, visa changes and a pathway to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants already living in the country. They also were upset that an emergency request to fund the wall can be done without GOP leaders having to make offsetting budget cuts to pay for it.

"As far as the wall is concerned, I suspect that a lot of Trump supporters would be just as happy with a big statue of a middle finger pointed south, because both that and a wall are about equally effective as national security strategies," said Rep. Luis Gutiérrez, D-Ill.

McConnell and Ryan insisted that they are working on coordination with Trump, despite the fact that the new president's controversial announcements this week on torture, voter fraud and immigration have taken attention away from their focus on health care, tax reform and reducing government regulation.

Ryan said he and McConnell have been working with the White House on those legislative priorities "so, yes, we are on the same page."

The two leaders said they expect to enact a tax overhaul and repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act — better known as Obamacare — before Congress adjourns for its annual August recess.

"I intend to stick to the plan and make as much progress as we can," McConnell said.

Ryan said congressional leaders have adopted a legislative agenda for the first 200 days of the Trump administration rather than the first 100 days because the Senate will be busy confirming about 1,200 of the president's nominees for government jobs.

"It's a very bold and aggressive agenda," Ryan said. "At the end of the day, if we get these things done, we really believe we're going to get the country back on the right track and turn things around for the people who elected us."

GOP Leaders Won't Say How They'll Pay For $12 Billion-$15 Billion Cost Of Border Wall

By Sean Sullivan

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — Congressional Republican leaders said Thursday that they plan to move forward with legislation to provide $12 billion to $15 billion to pay for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, but they declined to specify where that funding would come from, continuing the uncertainty over one of President Trump's signature campaign promises.

The comments from House Speaker Paul D. Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) at a GOP retreat here came as controversy over Trump's proposed wall set off a fresh round of international discord, as Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto canceled a planned visit with Trump.

Asked whether spending on the wall would be offset — meaning that there would be corresponding spending cuts elsewhere in the government or some other means of covering the funding — Ryan punted.

"As far as the offset, we're going to wait and see from the administration what their supplemental [spending plan] looks like," said Ryan. "I'm not going to get ahead of a policy and a bill that has not been written yet, But the point is we are going to finance the Secure Fence Act, which is the construction of the physical barrier on the border."

Asked if he could guarantee if the broader Republican agenda would not add to the deficit, Ryan did not respond directly.

"We're fiscal conservatives," he said. "What that means is we believe government should not live beyond its means. We believe that hardworking taxpayers in this country deserve a break in this country. And that means Washington takes less money from them and we also spend less, here."

Trump campaigned on the promise of building a wall that he claimed would curb illegal immigration and disrupt the drug trade. In an interview with ABC News broadcast Wednesday, Trump said taxpayers would initially foot the bill for the wall, but "we will be in a form reimbursed by Mexico." He did not lay out precisely how that would happen.

Mexico has said it will not pay for a wall. Peña Nieto canceled next week's planned meeting with Trump hours after Trump tweeted, "If Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting."

The president planned to address GOP lawmakers at the retreat Thursday afternoon.

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) told reporters here Thursday that lawmakers and officials needs to be more precise when they talk about building a wall and that a single physical barrier likely will likely not suffice.

"When you say, quote, 'build a wall', what does that exactly mean?" McCain said. "It means to me drones, technology, surveillance, all that. If you're talking about just building a wall, history shows that you can tunnel under them, you can breach them and you can climb over them."

McCain predicted that there will a "downpayment to begin construction" of border security, but it will not be anywhere near $15 billion. He said he believes that Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, through his agency, will be critical in winning support in Congress for whatever plan is devised.

McConnell and Ryan declined to wade into Trump's relationship with Peña Nieto.

"I don't have any advice to give to the president about that issue," said McConnell. He said that while Congress intends to address the construction of the wall, he will leave the president's interaction with foreign leaders to him.

Asked if he had any concerns about Mexico's relationship with the United States, Ryan (R-Wis.) replied, "I think it'll be fine."

Paul Kane and Mike DeBonis in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

White House Says Tax On Mexican Imports Would Pay For Border Wall

Move would effectively endorse an idea Trump criticized two weeks ago

By Richard Rubin

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Trump Is Starting A Trade War We Don't Need

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

UNTIL A few days ago, the U.S.-Mexico relationship was a strong one that benefited both countries. In the first week of his term, President Trump seems determined to change that — and for no good reason.

After decades of economic integration, the United States and its southern neighbor have established a valuable trading relationship exchanging $1.4 billion in goods every day. Mexico is the second-largest foreign market for U.S.-made products. Trade and investment between the two nations create wealth for both nations, and for innumerable American companies, workers and consumers, all of whom would be harmed by a trade war. Moreover, Mexico has become a valuable partner in promoting liberal values, having institutionalized multi-party democracy and steadily increased economic freedoms within its borders. As it has matured into a middle-class nation, the flow of Mexicans north has reversed, with more returning home in recent years than migrating to the United States.

In deference to this mutually beneficial relationship, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto has strained against provocation to get along with Mr. Trump. He invited him to a meeting in Mexico City last year, to Mr. Trump's political benefit and at Mr. Peña Nieto's own political risk. He was planning a visit to Washington next week to look for constructive cooperation.

Then, boom. Mr. Trump planted a stick of dynamite under a structure that leaders of various parties in both nations have been carefully constructing for decades. And for what?

The president first announced this week that he intended to proceed with construction of an expensive and unnecessary border wall, fulfilling a campaign promise based on misunderstandings of both the extent of illegal immigration and the best way to deal with it. Then Mr. Trump revived his pledge that Mexico would finance its construction. The humiliation was too much to bear for Mr. Peña Nieto, who faced understandable political pressure at home. The Mexican president canceled a scheduled meeting with Mr. Trump.

At that point, wiser heads still could have defused and de-escalated. Instead, White House press secretary Sean Spicer announced that the president is considering a new tax on Mexican imports to pay for his gratuitous wall. Mr. Spicer, without providing many details, suggested the tax would raise some $10 billion a year. He later explained that this is just one of several options. Depending on its design, such an imposition could indeed hurt Mexico. But it also would likely act as a tax on American consumers of Mexican goods. American consumers, that is, would pay for the wall by paying higher prices for Mexican-grown tomatoes, Mexican-sewn clothing and Mexican-built cars.

U.S. officials should reach out and seek to repair the week's damage. It took the United States nearly a decade to recover from the economic wreckage of the last recession. A wealth-destroying trade war with one of America's closest partners would threaten that long-sought recovery.

Trump's Little Mexican War

The President is treating our neighbor like Obama treated Israel.

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Trump's 20% Mexican Border Tariff Would Impact Auto Industry

By Brent Snavely, Gregory Korte And Todd Spangler

Detroit Free Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's plan for a wall along the Mexican border could be financed through a 20% border tax on all imports from Mexico, a new detail in the evolving saga between the U.S. and Mexico that would have a direct impact on the U.S. automotive industry.

"It clearly provides the funding and does so in a way that the American taxpayer is wholly respected," White House

press secretary Sean Spicer told reporters. "We are probably the only major country that doesn't treat imports this way."

Trump's campaign promise to build a wall along the Mexican border and the president's desire to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement by bringing automotive jobs back to the U.S. have been in the spotlight throughout the week.

Several automotive executives have said that the costs of a steep border tariff could be offset by Trump's plan to lower corporate taxes and relax fuel economy and other regulations. Wall Street analysts estimate a tariff could raise prices of vehicles from Mexico by $2,300.

"A 20% tariff would raise the cost of manufacturing in North America, cutting into the competitiveness of all three countries," said Christopher Wilson, deputy director of the Mexico Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center in Washington. "The tariff would violate NAFTA and WTO norms, and quite likely provoke retaliation from Mexico."

Spicer announced the policy proposal in an unannounced "gaggle" with reporters on Air Force One on Thursday, underscoring just how quickly the Trump White House is churning out policy proposals in his first week in office.

Shortly afterward, Spicer clarified to a separate group of reporters in the West Wing that it was just one proposal. "There are clearly a bunch of ways it can be done," he said. "The point is American taxpayers are not going to fund it."

White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus added that it was part of a "buffet" of options.

Representatives of Fiat Chrysler, Ford and General Motors declined to comment on the 20% tariff idea Thursday afternoon.

Portrayed at first as a policy proposal, Spicer's comments were nearly immediately walked back by the White House as an example of options that are being explored.

Whatever it is, the idea is part of a broader topic that has been simmering within the U.S. automotive industry for months and has reached a boiling point.

CEOs for the Detroit Three all joined Trump earlier this week to talk about free trade, jobs, U.S. investments and regulations.

On Thursday morning, both Sergio Marchionne, CEO of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, and Mark Fields, CEO of Ford, answered questions about Trump and his trade policies during financial reporting calls with Wall Street.

Marchionne said most of the policies that President Donald Trump is proposing would benefit the automotive industry but warned that dismantling NAFTA could have "monumental consequences" for the industry.

"The question about repatriation of all of the manufacturing footprint into the United States has got monumental consequences to the industry overall," Marchionne said before Spicer's comment about a 20% tariff. "I think there are repercussions that go well beyond FCA."

Marchionne applauded Trump's goal of reducing corporate taxes and said the new president's policy goals could prompt the automaker to move some jobs from Mexico to the U.S.

"We have run the numbers, and overall they are good things," Marchionne said. "The policy direction that is being taken by President Trump is something we appreciate."

Ford CFO Bob Shanks also told Wall Street that the Dearborn automaker is counting on other policy proposals to offset the cost of any tariff.

"When you combine it with some of the other aspects of the blueprint like the lower tax rate and some of the other aspects ... that's what gives us, at least for now, a positive point of view on that particular proposal," Shanks said.

GM also declined to comment on Spicer's comments on Thursday. But earlier in the week, GM CEO Mary Barra also expressed a positive view of Trump's overall approach to the automotive industry.

"The U.S. is our home market and we are eager to come together to reinvigorate U.S. manufacturing," Barra said in a statement. "We all want a vibrant U.S. manufacturing base that is competitive globally and that grows jobs. It's good for our employees, our dealers, our suppliers and our customers."

The unexpected proposal and subsequent backtracking underscored just how quickly the Trump White House is churning out policy proposals in a hectic first week in office, with a crowded calendar of meetings, speeches and executive actions.

The border tax plan would need congressional approval, and Spicer described it as the beginning of a process that would be part of overall tax reform. The tax proposal would have the benefit of dovetailing two of his signature policies: curtailing illegal immigration and enacting more protectionist trade regulations.

But the proposal could face resistance even among Republicans.

"Border security yes, tariffs no," Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-S.C., wrote on Twitter. "Simply put, any policy proposal which drives up costs of Corona, tequila, or margaritas is a big-time bad idea. Mucho Sad."

The U.S. trade deficit with Mexico was $49.2 billion in 2015, according to the U.S. Trade Representative. Though Spicer didn't explain how the tax would work, the principle is similar to a border adjustment tax currently being discussed in Congress, which would heavily tax imports but give a tax credit on exports.

"Right now our country's policy is to tax exports and let imports flow freely in, which is ridiculous," Spicer said.

Spicer ran through the math by applying 20% to the difference, coming up with nearly $10 billion a year.

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The U.S. could "easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone. That's really going to provide the funding," he said.

Actual imports from Mexico totaled $316.4 billion in 2015. A good portion of that is from the automotive industry.

Mexico has become the seventh largest vehicle producer in the world. There are currently a number of manufacturers with a presence in Mexico, including GM, Fiat Chrysler, Ford, Nissan, Honda, Toyota, VW, Mazda and Kia.

This manufacturing base produces 42 brands and 500 models in 22 manufacturing plants and has a network of 1,800 dealers, according to the U.S. Trade Representative.

'Finally': Trump's Illegal Immigration Crackdown Wins Praise From Some Activists

By Cindy Carcamo And Dakota Smith, Contact Reporters

Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration has sparked concern from many California politicians. But it is winning praise from activists who for years have been trying to reduce illegal immigration.

Robin Hvidston, executive director of We The People Rising, an anti-illegal immigration organization based in Claremont, said Trump's actions bring new hope to activists like her.

The organization has turned out to meetings in Rialto and Huntington Park and of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to oppose sanctuary measures.

"Ending sanctuary cities is a way to restore the rule of law to the cities of California and throughout the United States," she said. "We … are happy and encouraged that, after decades of federal lawbreaking, a president is finally taking action to enforce federal immigration laws."

Roy H. Beck, who heads NumbersUSA, a powerful national advocacy group opposing illegal immigration, praised Trump's move.

"The new policies announced on sanctuary cities finally put federal executive action on the side of the victims and potential victims of crime instead of protecting the interests of the businesses and organizations who profit from keeping as many illegal migrants in the country as possible."

Two decades ago, California was a hotbed for the anti-illegal immigration movement. In 1994, California voters approved Proposition 187, which was meant to cut many public services for people here illegally. (The law was later ruled unconstitutional.)

But more recent political and demographic shifts have made California decidedly more welcoming to those here without proper papers.

More than 400 jurisdictions across the country have some sort of "sanctuary" policy aimed at welcoming those here illegally, including Los Angeles, San Francisco and about 40 others in California.

Details about Trump's crackdown remain unclear. On Wednesday, the president signed two executive orders designed to begin building a wall along the border with Mexico, add lockups for detaining immigrants who cross the border illegally, enhance enforcement powers for border agents and strip federal funding to cities that refuse to cooperate with immigration enforcement.

According to a draft document reviewed by The Times, under the new order, the federal government would threaten to withhold funds from so-called sanctuary cities that limit cooperation with immigration officials.

Many political leaders both in big cities and in Sacramento have vowed to fight Trump.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti told reporters Wednesday that he doesn't believe the federal government can stop funding for L.A. and cited the 10th Amendment, which addresses the powers of state and federal governments.

"We feel very strong the legal case is clear," Garcetti said.

The particulars of Trump's orders are still being dissected by Los Angeles leaders. But City Council President Herb Wesson told reporters that "the city is going to continue to operate the way it operates."

Los Angeles will receive about $500 million this fiscal year from the federal government to pay for an array of services, including port security, anti-gang programs and senior citizen services.

San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee said he doesn't foresee any changes in his city's sanctuary policies. Officials in San Jose said much the same thing.

Better Barriers Are Worth The Cost: Opposing View

By Dan Stein

USA Today, January 26, 2017

On Wednesday, President Trump ordered completion of border security measures that were promised by Congress in 2006 but never fulfilled. The centerpiece of the president's order is secure barriers (a wall, perhaps) along the areas of the border required to achieve operational security. It also includes upgrades in electronic monitoring of the border and an additional 5,000 border agents. All of these things are badly needed to gain control of the border, and would help both Mexico and the U.S. eliminate cartel operations.

Who will pay is now under debate. Regardless of who pays, it is a great deal for taxpayers. U.S. taxpayers now absorb recurring costs in excess of $100 billion a year to provide basic services to illegal aliens and their children. Even at the high end of the one-time cost estimate for

constructing a wall, in the $15 billion and $25 billion range, the structures are cheap at twice the price.

While border security infrastructure is important to stemming the flow of illegal immigration and protecting national security, it is just one component of an overall strategy. Equally important, we must give people reasons not to cross our borders illegally in the first place.

President Trump has also taken the first steps toward ending the magnets that draw large numbers of illegal aliens to this country, while adding deterrence through the end of "catch and release" folly. On Wednesday, he put sanctuary jurisdictions with non-cooperation policies on notice: Maintain those policies and forfeit billions of federal dollars. Trump will insist Congress send a bill that mandates the use of E-Verify by all employers, thereby finally — after years of waiting — addressing the lure of jobs in this country.

Our relationship with Mexico is important, even vital. But it must be based on a mutuality of respect for our borders and our laws.

This integrated border and interior enforcement strategy will restore our national footing as a nation that will enforce its laws and protect the public interest.

Dan Stein is president of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, a non-profit group that favors more restrictive immigration policies.

Immigrants Rights Activists Rally Against Trump Orders

By Jessica Kwong

Orange County (CA) Register, January 25, 2017

SANTA ANA – Several dozen immigrants rights activists rallied outside the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services field office Thursday morning against executive orders President Donald Trump signed a day earlier, pledging continued support for marginalized communities.

Trump's orders on Wednesday to begin building a border wall and pulling federal money from sanctuary cities are "un-American," said Mirvette Judeh Maaytah, vice chairwoman of the Arab American Civic Council.

Roberto Herrera, a community engagement advocate for Resilience OC, said his group and others at the rally will defend the sanctuary ordinance Santa Ana adopted Jan. 17 and, "if anything, we need to push ordinances across other cities."

"Our objective is to get folks to recognize that Orange County communities are united against Trump," Herrera said. "Being in the conservative county in California, the organizations here are united to stand strong and to lead."

Trump Orders 'Tear Our Families Apart'

By Niraj Warikoo

Detroit Free Press, January 26, 2017

Her eyes welling up, a 28-year-old mother of three in Detroit said she was worried that her life in America could end as President Donald Trump vowed this week to crack down on immigration.

"We're afraid," said Jasmine Lomeli, 28, a native of Mexico who came to the U.S. in 2002 as a teen with her parents. "We don't know what's going to happen. ... I don't know if I will be separated from my kids."

Lomeli's fears echo throughout Michigan, where many undocumented immigrants and their children worry after Trump announced on Wednesday executive orders that crack down on them and punish cities that seek to protect them. Lomeli's parents came to the U.S. without legal permission, bringing Lomeli along when she was 14-year-old.

Today she is the mother of three children, ages 10, 8, and 4, all born in the U.S. Lomeli is a DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipient, a program created under President Barack Obama that allowed her to work and stay legally in the U.S. DACA spares her from worrying about being deported and separated from her kids or about doing basic tasks such as driving. Many undocumented immigrants fear being pulled over by law enforcement and then later deported.

She worries that Trump could end the program: "With DACA, we feel safe, and now, we don't know what's going to happen."

But she and others are determined to fight back. On Thursday, she joined a wide range of immigrant and minority groups who spoke out against Trump's executive orders, saying the orders unfairly target immigrants and Muslims. They gathered in Detroit at the office of Michigan United, an advocacy group.

"We're here to stay," Lomeli said. "We're going to fight to stop discrimination against people. ... I'm going to fight for my children."

Trump has expressed sympathy for DACA recipients, but some advocates say his orders indicate that the program could be removed. It's unclear whether DACA will remain.

"We will not allow Trump to take this program away," she said. "We'll fight for our rights."

Adonis Flores, the immigrant rights coordinator at Michigan United who's a DACA recipient, said, "Donald Trump is trying to tear our families apart with the stroke of a pen. As a community, we are resilient and will resist with our whole strength. As a country we are stronger than his hateful and divisive policies. This isn't about fixing our broken immigration system — this is about demonizing vulnerable families to score cheap political points."

Trump is also expected to sign another executive order this week that targets Muslim immigrants from seven countries and refugees, cutting their numbers and stopping all visitors from some countries. Three of the countries that

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Trump is targeting — Iraq, Syria and Yemen — have large immigration populations in metro Detroit.

Local community and religious leaders vowed to push back against his plans, including holding seminars to educate people of their rights and developing a network of churches that would be sanctuaries for immigrants.

At the press conference held at Michigan United offices, Brendan Wu, a community organizer with the Michigan branch of the Asian-American advocacy group Asian Pacific Islander American Vote, slammed Trump's plan that targets Muslims, saying it echoes the idea behind the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Trump is reportedly planning to allow exceptions to his restrictions on refugees from Muslim-majority countries for religious minority groups, such as Christians.

"This turns our immigration system into a religious filter, one that says your faith is what makes you ineligible and unwanted," Wu said. "If you think that today, they're just after Muslims, or they're just after Hispanics, remember that these policies are just the start. We have seen this movie before.

"Only 65 years ago, the military locked an entire population for the sole crime of being Japanese," Wu said, referring to the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII. "My brothers and sisters in the Muslim and Latino communities are targets today, but my family could very well be next on the list."

Wu and other speakers urged unity across racial, ethnic and religious lines to fight back against Trump's plans.

"We will overcome this together," said Sergio Martinez of Detroit, an immigrant from Mexico who's with Michigan United. "We will overcome hate with love. ... No matter what Trump says, we are here to stay."

Trump's plans brought mixed reaction from elected officials.

Asked if he favored restrictions on refugees that Trump is expected to announce, Gov. Snyder said Thursday at the Capitol:

"He has to make those decisions. That's not a responsibility at the state level. I'm going to continue to promote Michigan as a welcoming place for immigrants.

"That's something that's important that ties right into the theme of growing Michigan in terms of our population."

Asked about Trump possibly calling on state and local police to enforce immigration laws, Snyder said he didn't see that as one of their primary responsibilities. He said police in Michigan are doing a good job of reducing crime.

Advocates for immigrant rights are concerned about Trump's order to target sanctuary cities by cutting off federal funding if they harbor undocumented immigrants. In recent weeks, the mayors of cities including Boston, New York and San Francisco have publicly defended their cities as sanctuary cities and criticized Trump in news conferences, but the office of Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan has said that the city of Detroit is not a sanctuary city as Trump defines it.

In a statement Thursday to the Free Press, Duggan's chief of staff, Alexis Wiley, said "the President's Executive Order does not affect any policy or practice in the City of Detroit."

Wiley said Trump's order "will have no effect on any operation of the City of Detroit. The Detroit Police Department has always cooperated with federal customs and immigration officials on law enforcement. A decade ago, the Detroit City Council passed an ordinance which banned the practice of improper profiling, which it labeled a 'Sanctuary City Ordinance.' The Detroit City ordinance does not contain any of the provisions to which the President's Executive Order are directed.

"If the definition of a Sanctuary City is one in which people are not profiled because of their appearance, Detroit is a Sanctuary City," Wiley added. "If the definition of a Sanctuary City is one in which local law enforcement refuses to cooperate with federal customs and immigration officials, Detroit is not a Sanctuary City."

There are about 97,000 to more than 126,000 undocumented immigrants in Michigan, out of more than 11 million nationwide.

Read more:

"Law enforcement experts across the country have pointed out that sanctuary city policies can actually deter crime, as such policies make it more likely that undocumented immigrants will report crime and cooperate with law enforcement," said state Rep. Stephanie Chang, D-Detroit. "Building that trust is critical to helping our country move forward. In addition, I am very concerned that opening up the priorities for deportation may to have a devastating impact on residents of southwest Detroit in my district."

State Rep. Abdullah Hammoud, D-Dearborn, whose district has a sizable Arab immigrant population, said that Trump's "orders in no way resemble good policy. ... Threatening to withhold funding from cities offering a public service you disagree with does not properly address America's immigration concerns. Our focus should instead be on humane and responsible comprehensive immigration reform."

Arab-American groups slammed Trump's planned order, saying it discriminates against Arabs and Muslims. A draft copy of Trump's expected executive order on refugees and Muslim immigrants obtained by the Los Angeles Times makes references to honor killings and gender-based violence, seeming to link violence against women to Islam.

The order will ban all visitors from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen for 30 days.

Read more:

Joseph Kassab, founder and president of the Iraqi Christians Advocacy and Empowerment Institute in West

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Bloomfield, said he doesn't know yet what exactly the orders will say, but he supports the idea of vetting people of all backgrounds to make sure they're not terrorists or fanatics.

"I would support vetting and stopping people from coming in who are found to be of a terrorist or fanatical or extremist background," Kassab said.

Kassab said that religious minority groups like Chaldeans (Iraqi Catholics) in places like Iraq are often victims of terrorism and so would be more likely not to support terrorism.

"Everybody should be vetted, from every religion, ethnicity, everybody," Kassab said. "But the vetting for the minorities who are victims of terrorism and fanaticism might be easier than others."

Is Detroit a "sanctuary city" and how will it respond to Trump's executive order on immigration and sanctuary cities?

Here's the full response from Alexis Wiley, the chief of staff to Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan:

"The President's Executive Order does not affect any policy or practice in the City of Detroit.

Detroit is a Welcoming City to people from all countries. The recent launch of the Detroit Municipal ID, our commitment to hiring bilingual city employees, the City Council's Immigration Task Force, and the administration's hiring of the City's first full-time Director of Immigrant Affairs were all initiatives done in the last three years in support of that commitment.

As far as the executive order itself, it will have no effect on any operation of the City of Detroit. The Detroit Police Department has always cooperated with federal customs and immigration officials on law enforcement. A decade ago, the Detroit City Council passed an ordinance which banned the practice of improper profiling, which it labeled a "Sanctuary City Ordinance". The Detroit City ordinance does not contain any of the provisions to which the President's Executive Order are directed.

If the definition of a Sanctuary City is one in which people are not profiled because of their appearance, Detroit is a Sanctuary City.

If the definition of a Sanctuary City is one in which local law enforcement refuses to cooperate with federal customs and immigration officials, Detroit is not a Sanctuary City.

Whatever label is used, Detroit's commitment to making Detroit a Welcoming City to immigrants from around the world remains just as strong and all of Detroit's Welcoming City initiatives will continue."

Attorneys Warn Immigrants Not To Travel Outside The U.S., Thanks To Trump

An executive order may prevent some immigrants legally here from coming back.

By Elise Foley

Huffington Post, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON — Immigration attorney Ally Bolour got a call on Wednesday from a client worried about President Donald Trump's expected executive order that could temporarily shut down travel from majority-Muslim countries.

The client is planning a trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, for his birthday. He lives in the U.S. legally as a green-card holder, but he's from Iran — one of the countries Trump will likely single out for restrictions. The man, Amir, who asked to be identified only by his first name, already paid for his flight and hotel, but asked Bolour for advice.

"If I were you, I wouldn't go," Bolour said he told Amir. "It's too uncertain."

Trump has not yet signed an executive order to keep people from certain countries from coming to the United States. But already, news that he is considering such restrictions is having a dramatic impact. Leaked drafts indicate it could be harder or even impossible for people from seven countries to get into the U.S. — even if they hold green cards.

Immigration attorneys and advocacy groups said they were being inundated with questions from people legally in the U.S. wondering whether it would be safe for them to travel. Some want to leave the country to attend a parent's funeral. Students hoped to travel home for spring break. Couples have plans for a vacation together. All of them, lawyers are advising, should stay put.

"I don't want to make people scared for no reason, but I think caution is best right now until we see what that exact language will be," said Nermeen Arastu, clinical law professor at CUNY School of Law. "If you're a not U.S. citizen, don't leave right now."

Hassan Shibly, executive director of Council on American-Islamic Relations' Florida chapter, said a source in the federal government advised him to tell people that non-citizens who are natives of the countries mentioned in drafts of Trump's executive order should not leave the U.S. for the time being, even if they hold green cards.

"We definitely need people to take caution at this point," Shibly said. "With Trump, you cannot take any risks. You cannot take any principle of liberty or justice for granted. We cannot let our guard down."

The attorneys and experts said they have spent recent days trying to calm immigrants and Muslim communities. Offering advice before Trump signs the order, without knowing the final language, is a particular challenge, they pointed out. They don't know, for example, whether it will apply to green-card holders and what countries will be targeted.

"These orders are going to have an impact on the daily life of hundreds of thousands of individuals in this country who are here through different visa programs," said Abed

Ayoub, legal director at the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

Immigration attorney Hassan Ahmad cautioned against blanket statements of advice about whether to leave or stay. The order isn't signed, he said, and many immigration cases are different. Some people may be seeking asylum, for example, in a different situation than someone with a green card.

"There is no easy answer, unfortunately, and that's a really tough pill to swallow," Ahmad said.

Amir is still unsure what to do about his trip. When he planned the vacation, he never imagined he'd have to worry about presidential politics, he said.

Amir, who is gay, came to the U.S. 11 years ago as a student and received asylum based on persecution in Iran over his sexual orientation, he said. He has held a green card for five years and has traveled outside the U.S. multiple times for work and pleasure. He hasn't been back to Iran.

Amir said his whole life is in the U.S.: a job, a house, a partner and friends. He said he'll make up his mind about his vacation after he sees what Trump's executive order actually says, and whether green-card holders already outside the U.S. have trouble returning.

"Let's say I go to Mexico and want to come back and they don't let me in. Where am I going to go?" he asked. "I can't go back to my home country. I don't have any other place to go."

'Over My Dead Body': Tribe Aims To Block Trump's Border Wall On Arizona Land

Controlling 2.8m acres of a reservation, the Tohono O'odham Nation vowed to oppose construction on its land and called for a meeting with the president

By Sam Levin

The Guardian (UK), January 26, 2017

Donald Trump's proposed border wall could face a major obstacle in Arizona, where an indigenous tribe has vowed to oppose construction on its land, paving the way for potential mass resistance following the model of Standing Rock.

The Tohono O'odham Nation, a federally recognized tribe with a reservation that spans 75 miles of the US-Mexico border, announced on Thursday that it does not support the wall and criticized the White House for signing an executive order without consulting the tribe.

The Tohono O'odham's statement calls for a meeting with the president and comes after a tribal vice-chairman declared the government would build the wall "over my dead body". Earlier in his first week in office, Trump also promised to push forward with the the Dakota Access pipeline, which last year attracted an unprecedented gathering of indigenous groups to back the Standing Rock Sioux tribe in its fight against the oil project.

The Tohono O'odham tribe, which has roughly 28,000 members and controls 2.8m acres of a reservation in south-western Arizona, has long struggled with the militarized international border that was drawn through the middle of its traditional lands.

The O'odham people historically inhabited lands that stretched south to Sonora, Mexico, and just north of Phoenix, Arizona, and there are tribe members who still live in Mexico. The tribe today has the second largest Native American land base in the country, and indigenous people say the US Border Patrol has for decades significantly disrupted tribal communities and their day-to-day life.

"It cuts through our ancestral land, and it divides families that have been able to go back and forth freely since before the border line was drawn," said Bradley Moreno, a Tohono O'odham member who grew up miles from the border. "Border Patrol is a way of life for us."

The tribe has said that Border Patrol agents in the past have detained and deported Tohono O'odham people who were "simply traveling through their own traditional lands, practicing migratory traditions essential to their religion, economy and culture".

Moreno, 35, said law enforcement harassment is common for indigenous people and that he has been pulled over and questioned by Border Patrol more than a dozen times.

There is also already a steel barrier at the border along the reservation, and if a wall is built, the results would be disastrous, Moreno added.

"It's going to affect our sacred lands. It's going to affect our ceremonial sites. It's going to affect the environment. We have wildlife, and they have their own patterns of migration," he said. "There are just so many things that are wrong with this. The whole idea behind it is just racist."

Trump launched his campaign with a pledge to build a wall, with a speech that labeled Mexican immigrants "criminals" and "rapists". His executive order on Wednesday, part of a series of anti-immigration announcements, called for the building of a "contiguous, physical wall or other similarly secure, contiguous, and impassable physical barrier".

It's unclear how Congress could attempt to finance construction, and Trump has claimed that Mexico would ultimately be forced to pay the bill. On Thursday, Mexico's president Enrique Peña Nieto canceled a scheduled visit to meet with Trump after repeatedly stating that his nation would not fund for a wall.

Although Trump campaigned on addressing a border "crisis", experts have disputed the effectiveness of constructing a wall, noting research showing there is no link between immigration and crime.

Trump would face numerous legal hurdles if he attempted to build a wall on Tohono O'odham land, which functions under law as an autonomous government.

"He is going to have a very serious and prolonged battle with the O'odham people," said Raul Grijalva, a Democratic congressman from Arizona. "They know what's at stake is their sovereignty."

The tribe, which did not respond to interview requests on Thursday, said in its statement it would oppose a "large scale fortified wall".

Indigenous activists vowed to aggressively fight the wall if it reaches tribal land in Arizona, and Moreno said people were already discussing strategies for "direct action".

Audra Antone, who lives in the state's Gila River Indian Community and whose family is O'odham, said if the government moved to start construction, large protests like Standing Rock could emerge.

"It's divide and conquer again. We need to stand our ground as Native American people," said Antone, noting that her son's father was deported to Mexico. "We're going backward if we do not stand up and fight."

Trump: No Muslim Ban, Just Immigration Restrictions

By David Jackson

USA Today, January 26, 2017

President Trump denies he is about to authorize a "ban" on Muslim migration, only restrictions on entry from countries with a history of terrorism.

"It's countries that have tremendous terror," Trump told ABC News in his first television interview as president. "And it's countries that people are going to come in and cause us tremendous problems."

The Trump team is poised to suspend refugee and visa programs as applied to many Muslim countries in the Middle East, including war-torn Syria, with details still being determined..

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said there is no set date for issuance of new rules because the "nature of them has not been decided yet."

Critics of the imminent orders said they will block law-abiding Muslims trying to escape the very kind of violence Trump is talking about.

Rabbi Jack Moline, president of the Interfaith Alliance, called it a "de facto" ban on Muslims.

"The United States has long prided itself as a safe bastion for refugees around the globe facing persecution and strife," Moline said. "President Trump is poised to trample upon that great legacy in one of his first major acts in office."

Trump told ABC News his target is the Islamic State and other extremist groups: "You're looking at people that come in, in many cases, in some cases with evil intentions. I don't want that."

Some people could get in, Trump suggested, but only after what he called "extreme vetting."

"We're going to have extreme vetting in all cases," he told ABC. "And I mean extreme."

Trump's Order To Ban Refugees And Immigrants Triggers Fears Across The Globe

By Sudarsan Raghavan, Louisa Loveluck And Kevin Sieff

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

CAIRO — President Trump's executive order to tighten the vetting of potential immigrants and visitors to the United States, as well as to ban some refugees seeking to resettle in the country, will shatter countless dreams and divide families, would-be immigrants and human rights activists warned.

The draft order, expected to be signed as early as Thursday, calls for the immediate cessation of ongoing resettlement of Syrian refugees in the United States, rejecting visas for visitors and immigrant hopefuls based partly on their ideology and opinions.

A copy of the draft orders was leaked Wednesday to civil rights groups and obtained by The Washington Post.

"I feel devastated," said Ibrahim Abu Ghanem, 37, a father of three in the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, whose father and two brothers live in the United States. "This means all my plans are going to go down the drain."

If the order is enacted, among those immediately affected would be potential immigrants and visitors from seven Muslim countries — Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Iran, Libya and Sudan — that are considered by the Trump administration as nations whose citizens "would be detrimental to the interests of the United States." For the next 30 days, they will not be allowed entry into the United States, even if they have visas and relatives who are U.S. citizens.

The order also calls for halting all admission and resettlement of refugees for 120 days pending the review of vetting procedures. For Syrian refugees, the ban will remain in place until further notice.

Once restarted, annual refugee admissions from all nations would be halved, from a current level of 100,000 to 50,000.

For those affected, the fear is that the order will be a harbinger for even greater restrictions on the horizon for Muslim immigrants, refugees and visitors — fulfilling Trump's campaign promises of "extreme vetting" of foreigners seeking entry into the United States and installing "a Muslim ban." Somalia, Syria, Iraq and Iran are among the leading countries of origin of recent refugees to the United States.

"It's going to be devastating," said Denise Bell, senior campaigner for refugee and migrant rights for the watchdog

group Amnesty International. “Refugees are not a threat. They are the ones fleeing horrific violence. They are trying to rebuild their lives. They want the same safety and opportunities that any of us would want.”

“And so we are scapegoating them in the guise of national security. Instead, we are betraying our own values. We are violating international law,” she said.

Since Wednesday, as news of the impending order spread, lives were quickly affected across the world, particularly among the citizens of the countries immediately targeted. For them, it’s already difficult to get visas or immigrate to the United States. Vetting has been stringent since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, say human rights activists. Even so, many potential Muslim immigrants went through long screening processes, often lasting years, to gain entry to the United States. Now, many find themselves in an emotional and bureaucratic limbo.

In Sanaa, Ghanem had been making plans to travel with his family to Cairo to apply for visas at the U.S. Embassy in the Egyptian capital. His mother and younger brother are also in Yemen. He wanted to reunite his family.

“My wife and I have spent countless nights dreaming of a better future for us and especially our children,” said Ghanem, a former administrator at a center for battling cancer. “We were hoping for a better life, better opportunities and good education for our children.”

The shock for Syrian refugees already in the United States cut deepest for those awaiting the arrival of loved ones.

For Eman, a widow in Chicago who asked that her surname be withheld out of concern for family back home, that means her son. They fled the western Syrian city of Homs in 2012, fearing he would be conscripted into President Bashar al-Assad’s military. Months after her own arrival in America, Eman had expected her eldest to arrive in short order, once paperwork for his new marriage was approved.

“It seemed like everything was fine and he was finally going to join me here. Now they tell me it might be impossible because of the president’s new decree,” she said. “I’m so scared. I came to America because I thought it would be best for my family.”

Syria’s bitter war has created the largest refugee crisis since World War II. Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon have absorbed more than 4 million displaced Syrians, spread across camps or living on meager resources in cramped apartments. In comparison, the United States accepted less than 13,000 Syrian immigrants last year, a figure that only rose in the final months after tight vetting procedures initially stemmed the monthly flow to the low hundreds.

“We have to remember these people are escaping the very same terrorism that Trump says he’s banning them for,” said Suzanne Akhras Sahloul, founder of the Syrian Community Network, a grass-roots initiative that has stepped in to fill the linguistic and cultural gaps that larger relief agencies are unable to address.

Refugee advocates say the resettlement of Syrians presents challenges unusual in the United States, even among new refugees. Doctors in Chicago discovered that some Syrians still carried shrapnel in their bodies. Less visible but more pervasive is the trauma. Many have been tortured or lived amid constant bombardment.

In Iraq, where Iraqi military personnel are fighting against the Islamic State alongside U.S. Special Operations forces, the visa ban was considered an insult.

“They trained me to fight terrorism, and they look at me as a terrorist?” said one F-16 pilot who trained in the United States for five years and declined to be named because he did not have his superiors’ permission to speak to reporters. “It’s true that they have the right to protect their country, but that doesn’t mean they should treat us like we are germs.”

He said he has no desire to live in the United States, but that he would like to visit again and “relax” after “fighting terrorism on their behalf.”

“If they really do ban us, it means we are of no value to them,” he said. “They are just using us.”

Ammar Karim, 37, an Iraqi correspondent with Agence France-Presse, is in the final steps of a program to resettle in the United States. He applied four years ago, and his sponsor in Seattle was recently informed to prepare for his arrival. Karim was one of the first interpreters to work with U.S. Marines in Baghdad following the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. He has also worked for large American news organizations, making him a target of militants.

On Thursday, Karim did not hide his disappointment and anger.

“Now, because of this new decision, I feel there is no hope that I will move to the U.S.,” he said. “I will have to stay in this country that is still not at peace. The people who will be affected by this ban are those who did the best for America in Iraq. They sacrificed their lives.”

He added: “It’s not fair. This president doesn’t understand our situation. The U.S. is abandoning the people who stood behind them.”

For Iran and Iranian Americans, the new restrictions are expected to hit particularly hard. Of the roughly 1 million Iranian Americans living in the United States, the vast majority still have family members in Iran. Those relatives, who fall under the new executive order banning citizens from certain countries, would be prohibited from visiting loved ones in the United States. Students, artists, filmmakers and even Europeans who also hold Iranian passports could be denied entry.

Under the executive order, governments are required to provide U.S. agencies with information confirming that any applicants are not a security threat. But because the United

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States and Iran do not have diplomatic ties — and have a history of tense relations — Iranian officials are unlikely to comply.

Even if they did, "we are skeptical . . . the Trump administration would accept such efforts," NIAC Action, the sister organization of the National Iranian American Council, said in a statement Wednesday. "This would, in effect, mean a permanent ban on entry for Iranians," the advocacy group said, adding that even Iranian green-card holders currently outside the United States could be barred from reentry.

In the world's largest refugee camp, called Dadaab, near the Kenya-Somalia border, news of Trump's impending announcement spread quickly.

"You could see the sadness on people's faces," said Mohammed Rashid, an English teacher who has been waiting for five years for his asylum case to be approved.

Between 2001 and 2015, the United States admitted more than 90,000 Somali refugees, according to the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. Many of them came from Dadaab, where generations of Somalis first fled civil war and then fled Islamic extremist groups, often applying for asylum in the United States after arriving at the camp.

Rashid fled Somalia for Dadaab in 1992 to save his family from the country's civil war. "We thought our children would have better lives in the U.S.," said Rashid. "Now, with Trump, we are disappointed. There is nowhere else for us to go."

Rashid sat for an interview with American resettlement officials in Kenya in 2015. His fingerprints were taken, but while waiting for his asylum to be approved, he and his wife had a third child, which he said delayed their approval.

After the election, he started following several Trump-related accounts on Twitter to keep abreast of American news. His brother was resettled in Seattle several years earlier, and Rashid already felt an attachment to the United States. In November, when a Somali-born student at Ohio State University injured 11 people in an attack, Rashid read Trump's tweet that the attacker was a "Somali refugee who should not have been in our country."

On Wednesday, Rashid saw a tweet that said Somali refugees would be banned from the United States. He said he tried not to cry. "The refugees are people who ran away; they are victims," he said. "I don't know why we are being targeted."

In Sudan, some were surprised to see their country on the list of affected countries. Earlier this month, the Obama administration relaxed long-standing sanctions on the country, and it appeared that relations between the nations were warming. As part of the agreement to lift sanctions, Sudanese officials pledged to increase cooperation on combating terrorism.

In 2001, the United States accepted more than 4,000 "Lost Boys" from Sudan, whose families were killed or vanished during the country's civil war. Their stories were broadcast in dozens of books, movies and television reports. Some of them went on to careers as professional athletes, diplomats and renowned writers.

The United States later resettled a large number of refugees fleeing conflict in Sudan's Darfur region, where 3.3 million people are still in need of humanitarian assistance, according to the United Nations.

Some Sudanese refugees in Cairo have spent years in Egypt seeking resettlement to the United States and Europe. Now, there is even less hope.

"I have been trying for four years, but all is in vain," said Maher Ismail, 23, a university student. "Our conditions here are dire. It is very difficult to get anywhere, the U.S. or any other place. I have applied for a lottery visa three months ago anyway, but I know how this is going to end up."

Ghanem said he believes that the attitude toward Muslim immigrants and visitors will only worsen in the United States and that he is afraid his family will never be reunited.

"This decision has really destroyed our dreams," he said. "I don't know what I will say to my mother or how I would break the news for her."

Loveluck reported from Beirut and Sieff from Nairobi. Ali al-Mujahed in Sanaa, Yemen, Heba Mahfouz in Cairo, Mustafa Salim in Baghdad, Loveday Morris in Jerusalem, Erin Cunningham in Turkey and Heba Habib in Stockholm contributed to this report.

Star Of Iranian Film Says She Will Boycott Oscars Over Trump's Visa Ban

By Rachel Donadio

New York Times, January 26, 2017

PARIS — The Iranian actress Taraneh Alidoosti, a co-star of "The Salesman," an Iranian film up for the foreign-language Academy Award, said Thursday that she would boycott the Oscars ceremony to protest President Trump's announcement that he would issue a temporary ban on visas to citizens from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

Mr. Trump said this week that he would issue an executive order to suspend immigration for at least 30 days for citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. It remains unclear how and whether the ban would take effect.

Ms. Alidoosti made her intentions clear on her Twitter feed, writing: "Trump's visa ban for Iranians is racist. Whether this will include a cultural event or not, I won't attend the #AcademyAwards 2017 in protest."

In an email interview, she said that she would not attend the Oscars ceremony on Feb. 26 even if it turned out the proposed ban did not affect her ability to get a visa.

"I decided not to go even if I could, because it hurts me deeply to see ordinary people of my country being rejected

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for what might be their legal right to have access to their children abroad or to their school classes as students," Ms. Alidoosti said.

"The Salesman," which the government of Iran approved for submission to the Academy Awards, is one of five films vying for best foreign language film. It is directed by Asghar Farhadi, whose "A Separation" won an Oscar for best foreign language film in 2012.

"The Salesman" tells the story of a Tehran couple whose lives are irrevocably changed when they have to move apartments while starring in an amateur production of Arthur Miller's "The Death of a Salesman."

Ms. Alidoosti said she had not discussed her decision with Mr. Farhadi and did not know who would represent the film at the ceremony. She said that the director had generally brought the lead actors of his films to foreign awards ceremonies, including to the Cannes Film Festival, where "The Salesman" received a strong critical reception last year.

The actress noted that the United States did not have an embassy in Tehran and that Iranians often traveled to neighboring countries to secure visas. "Many people have urgent medical cases," she said. "I'm sure all of them are not just going through the ordeal for a fun vacation; they might have a more serious case."

"I'm sure the United States has also benefited many times from Iranian immigrants and people who have worked there and served that country," Ms. Alidoosti added. "So it's not acceptable to me to respect a state that does not respect the people of my country."

A spokeswoman for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Madeleine Albright: 'I Stand Ready To Register As A Muslim'

By Sean Rossman

USA Today, January 26, 2017

Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright speaks during a memorial service for former Israel Prime Minister Shimon Peres at Adas Israel Congregation in Washington in October. Albright tweeted on Jan. 25 that she is ready to register as Muslim as a show of solidarity. (Photo: Zach Gibson, AP)

Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright — citing her varied religious background — said in a Wednesday tweet she's ready to register as a Muslim.

Albright, the first woman to run the State Department under former President Bill Clinton, joined thousands of people who have pledged to register as a Muslim. It's a push back against Trump's support of a Muslim registry on the campaign trail. The president's chief of staff Reince Priebus has since said Trump has no plans for a Muslim registry.

The website www.registerus.today has collected more than 30,000 pledges from people who said they'll register as a Muslim in order to support the faith.

"We pledge to stand together with Muslims across the country, and around the world," the website reads. "Because when we stand as one, no American can be singled out by their race, religion, income, gender identity, or sexual orientation."

Albright also tweeted her support for refugees, saying in a tweet, "There is no fine print on the Statue of Liberty. America must remain open to people of all faiths & backgrounds. #RefugeesWelcome."

The tweet comes amid news Trump is poised to suspend America's refugee program, which would halt the flow of people to the U.S. escaping religious, political and ethnic persecution

Follow Sean Rossman on Twitter: @SeanRossman

The U.S. Already Tried 'extreme Vetting' For Muslims. It Didn't Work.

By Aslı Ü. Bâli

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

President Trump is reportedly poised to signed an executive order to begin "extreme vetting" of immigrants and visitors to the United States. Though falling short of his infamous campaign promise of "a total and complete shutdown on Muslims entering the United States," reports suggest that this shutdown will include a ban on visas to the United States from several Muslim-majority countries and language that appears to uniquely target Muslims.

This would not be the first time the United States has sought to restrict entry by Muslim foreigners. A recently discontinued Bush-era registration program, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), did much the same thing. Its failure to achieve its avowed goals has important lessons for Trump's new plan.

NSEERS effectively created a registry for some Muslims, while remaining under the radar for most Americans. Male noncitizens over the age of 16 traveling to or present in the United States from 24 Arab- or Muslim-majority countries (plus North Korea) were registered. These men were required to enter the United States at designated airports — rather than those closest to their destination — to be fingerprinted, photographed and interrogated. They were also required to check in with immigration officials at regular intervals and depart only from designated airports.

For individuals already in the country, the consequences of NSEERS were severe. Men originally from the designated countries — except green-card holders or U.S. citizens — were required to report for questioning before immigration officials. This "call-in registration" or "Special Registration" sowed chaos among immigrant communities.

Because the requirements did not exist when their original visas were issued, many weren't even aware that the new registration rules applied to them.

The ensuing confusion, panic and trauma to long-standing immigrant communities was extensive. When the first registration deadline approached in December 2002, more than 400 individuals of Iranian origin in California rushing to comply with the new rules were arrested. In New York, deportations hollowed out parts of the Pakistani immigrant community. Immigration offices were not staffed to administer the program effectively, creating massive delays, with huge lines of people trying to register by published deadlines.

From 2002 to 2003, more than 83,500 men were processed through Special Registration and more than 13,700 were placed into deportation proceedings as a direct consequence of voluntarily complying with the requirements. There were reports of cases of mistaken detentions and removal proceedings. NSEERS was not just a registry. It actually multiplied the grounds for deporting men based on national origin.

The program also proved highly ineffective at its intended counterterrorism goals, yielding not a single terrorism-related prosecution over the decade it remained in place. Law enforcement experts found that the program's broad categorical profiling required vast resources and risked confusing signal and noise.

As a result of sustained opposition and controversies about implementation, aspects of the program were suspended as early as December 2003 when "check in" requirements were dropped. But the requirement that travelers register at ports of entry and depart only from designated airports remained in place for eight more years, making travel from designated countries cumbersome and stressful. Eventually, the introduction of other programs collecting biometric information from all visitors and at all airports rendered NSEERS registration requirements duplicative. On April 28, 2011, the Department of Homeland Security announced that NSEERS had been suspended and the 25 designated countries had been delisted.

While the 2011 DHS announcement ended the application of NSEERS, its regulatory framework remained. After the 2016 election, pressure mounted on the Obama administration to fully rescind the regulations. On Nov. 21, a letter signed by 200 civil rights and interfaith organizations was published calling on the Obama administration to rescind the regulatory framework for NSEERS. Ten days later, more than 50 Democratic members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to President Obama demanding the same.

In December, the Obama administration announced that it would dismantle the dormant program on the grounds "that NSEERS is not only obsolete, but that its use would divert limited personnel and resources from more effective measures." The United States now has an entry-exit system for all foreign visitors, rendering the rationale for introducing an additional registry targeting a subset of visitors from Muslim-majority countries less plausible.

While NSEERS was widely deemed counterproductive in preventing terrorism, it was never found unconstitutional. Attempts to constitutionally challenge the program failed with federal district courts across the country. In 2008, when a challenge reached the 2nd Circuit, that federal appellate court also ruled in favor of the program. Under current constitutional jurisprudence, the federal government's authority over immigration allows for national origin-based discrimination at our borders.

However, Trump's proposals might fare differently. Some of the "extreme vetting questions" listed in a draft proposal by a Trump advisor photographed in November were clearly related to religious belief, with questions about Sharia, jihad and gender equality. The vetting topics listed in the draft Executive Order that was leaked yesterday include a version of these questions without direct reference to Islam. For instance, in the place of jihad the order references "violent religious edicts."

Whereas the Bush administration disavowed religious profiling in its post-9/11 policies, Trump has repeatedly stated his intention to specifically target the Muslim community during the campaign and since the election. The same federal courts that found the NSEERS program constitutional might reach a different conclusion if new programs were shown to be based on religious animus.

Aslı Ü. Bâli is professor of law at the UCLA School of Law and director of the UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies.

Trump Creates Name-and-shame List To Embarrass Sanctuary Cities

By Stephen Dinan

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump on Wednesday ordered the Homeland Security Department to begin releasing a name-and-shame list of sanctuary cities, listing the specific crimes such as murder or robbery committed by those who have been released back into their communities under the sanctuary policies.

That was one of a number of less-noticed but potentially far-reaching moves tucked inside two new executive orders erasing decades of previous immigration enforcement policy and replacing it with the Trump plan, which calls for aggressive enforcement of existing laws.

Border Patrol and interior enforcement agents have been unshackled from the limits imposed by former President

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Barack Obama, as Mr. Trump said he wants to see them doing the jobs they were hired for.

He said he wants to enlist those local police and sheriff's offices that are eager to enforce immigration law, and will punish those that throw up roadblocks — including the new name-and-shame list.

Some 279 cities and counties refused to cooperate on at least some deportations in 2016, accounting for 2,008 immigrants who were shielded, according to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Each of those immigrants' convictions will now be publicly listed so residents can see the level of crimes committed by those released into their communities, under the Trump orders.

Analysts said that list could help rally internal opposition to sanctuary cities, which are already rallying to defy Mr. Trump.

"We will fight against attempts to undermine our values and the security of our cities," said the group Cities for Action, a coalition of big municipalities that support sanctuary policies. "As mayors and county executives nationwide have made clear today, we will continue to provide for all in our communities — regardless of where they come from — and work to continue building trust between city residents and law enforcement."

In addition to the shame list, Mr. Trump ordered Homeland Security to produce a list four times a year of all illegal immigrants serving time in federal or state prisons, or being held for trial.

And in another striking move, Mr. Trump ordered Homeland Security officials to begin releasing more information on illegal immigrants. He said the Privacy Act, which has regularly shielded information about illegal immigrants from public disclosure, will no longer apply to anyone who isn't a citizen or green card holder.

That could give the public a new depth of transparency, enabling them to see the types of illegal immigrants the government is encountering.

One part of the new orders would allow Homeland Security to ship illegal immigrants caught crossing the border from Mexico back into Mexico, even as they await the outcome of their deportation cases in the U.S.

That's allowed under existing law, but legal analysts said they'd never heard of it being used, and debated how far it might be used. But immigrant-rights advocates said it could hurt migrants who need protections.

"Given that many of the people crossing the border today are children and families fleeing violence in the Northern Triangle countries of Central America, invoking this provision threatens to undermine our commitment to refugee protections," said Tom Jawetz, vice president for immigration policy at the Center for American Progress.

The Mexican Embassy in Washington did not respond to a request for comment on the provision Wednesday night.

Experts said it's an open question whether Mexico could stymie that part of Mr. Trump's orders by refusing to take back those who crossed over its northern border into the U.S.

Another lesser-noticed provision of the new orders would push Homeland Security to collect fines from both illegal immigrants and "those who facilitate their presence" in the U.S.

That could potentially include sanctuary colleges and universities that protect illegal immigrants, and businesses that hire unauthorized workers.

Current law calls for fines of more than $20,000 per illegal immigrant for companies that are repeat offenders.

Conspiracy to harbor an illegal immigrant carries potential jail time or a fine of up to $10,000.

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Exclusive: Expecting Trump Action, U.S. Suspends Refugee Resettlement Interviews

By Yeganeh Torbati

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

US Halts Refugee Resettlement Interviews: Report

By Mark Hensch

The Hill, January 26, 2017

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has temporarily suspended refugee interviews overseas, according to a new report.

The DHS's decision to suspend staff trips to conduct the interviews effectively pauses future refugee admissions amid speculation that President Trump may drastically change U.S. refugee policy, Reuters said Thursday.

Reuters said the interviews are a critical step in the often years-long process of resettling people in the U.S.

Two sources with knowledge of the situation confirmed the agency's move to Reuters, with one adding that the DHS told those involved in refugee admissions about the decision Wednesday.

The resettlement interviews are usually one of the last hurdles refugees face before reaching American soil.

Refugees seeking admission also undergo extensive security screening by multiple U.S. agencies, along with vetting from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Reports emerged Wednesday that refugee advocacy groups have obtained a draft of a new order that Trump will sign.

The order would purportedly suspend all refugee admissions into the U.S. for 120 days while the secretary of State reviews refugee application procedures.

Refugees who had previously applied for admission, meanwhile, would have their submissions placed on hold until the secretary of State's review is complete.

The total number of refugees allowed in the U.S., the order adds, will also be reduced in fiscal year 2017 to 50,000, less than half of former President Obama's goal of 110,000.

Trump has repeatedly called for "extreme vetting" of those entering the U.S. from countries linked with terrorism, regardless of whether they're refugees.

Wednesday's draft order states Trump will temporarily suspend the entry of foreign nationals from some Muslim-majority countries upon implementation.

The countries listed include Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Syria, with entry from each suspended for 30 days after the order is issued.

U.S. Suspending Refugee Resettlement Interviews In Anticipation Of Trump Action

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

DHS Temporarily Halts Overseas Refugee Interviews

By Mary Kay Mallonee

CNN, January 26, 2017

Washington (CNN)The Department of Homeland Security is putting a temporary freeze on staff trips to other countries to interview refugees who want to come to the US, according to a law enforcement source.

The action, first reported by Reuters, comes as the agency awaits direction from President Donald Trump, who has made clear he plans on making significant changes to the refugee policy.

Halting these overseas interviews until further notice means the admissions process will remain in limbo as refugees await their interview with DHS staff.

"While US Citizenship and Immigration Services has delayed a number of upcoming trips, those trips have not been officially canceled," Gillian M. Christensen, a spokeswoman for the DHS, said in a statement.

Trump is considering a blanket ban on refugees for up to four months, according to a draft executive order obtained by CNN, in keeping with a campaign promise to enact stringent measures on Muslim migrants trying to enter the US.

The order, if enacted, would put in place tough new vetting measures in an attempt to bar potential terrorists from entering the country. Sources familiar with the order said Wednesday that Trump could sign it as early as Friday, but cautioned the language was not yet final.

Advocate Of Ending U.S. Birthright Citizenship May Be Joining Trump Administration

By Spencer S. Hsu

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

A prominent advocate of ending U.S. birthright citizenship is in line to join the Trump administration in an immigration-related position at the Department of Homeland Security, according to two former U.S. officials informed of transition changes by department personnel.

Jon D. Feere has been a legal policy analyst for the Center for Immigration Studies, a conservative group that calls for added immigration restrictions.

Reached Tuesday by a Washington Post reporter, Feere said, "I'm in between jobs. That's all I can say right now. I can't confirm anything," about accounts circulating among some current and former DHS officials that he would join the department in an immigration enforcement post.

Feere, 37, testified before the House Judiciary subcommittee on immigration in 2015 and has written several opinion pieces, including an August 2015 article in TheHill.com, proposing alternatives to a constitutional amendment by which Congress could enact a law or President Trump could issue an executive order denying citizenship, U.S. passports or Social Security numbers to American-born children of people in the country illegally.

Feere in 2010 estimated those births at between 300,000 and 400,000 a year, according to information on the CIS website. Other estimates put the figure lower. About 275,000 babies were born to unauthorized-immigrant parents in 2014, according to Pew Research Center estimates based on government data.

"President Obama has demonstrated that unilateral action by the executive branch is a legitimate means of changing the nation's immigration policy," Feere wrote in his 2015 article. "Though his actions have been controversial, executive actions that direct agencies how to approach birthright citizenship are arguably more justifiable."

Feere added, "Whether Trump worked with Congress to draft legislation or simply directed agencies to apply the Citizenship Clause more narrowly, the issue would likely end up at the Supreme Court."

Feere's name surfaced as GOP congressional judiciary committee staffers were said by former officials to be in the running for other homeland security positions. Those under consideration reportedly include Tracy L. Short, a House panel counsel who formerly served as deputy chief counsel with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Atlanta office, and Gene P. Hamilton, a Senate panel counsel for

Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), Trump's pick for attorney general.

Spokeswomen for Sessions and the House committee did not return requests for comment Wednesday, and Short and Hamilton did not respond to email messages seeking comment.

The administration's potential staffing moves come under a spotlight as Trump began signing executive orders Wednesday on immigration matters including enabling construction of his proposed wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Sessions has been an advocate of a tougher crackdown on immigration, although it remained unclear what steps Trump may undertake regarding the Obama administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA. The 2012 initiative has given temporary protection from deportation to hundreds of thousands of people who arrived in the United States as children. Trump vowed during the campaign to reverse it.

Denying citizenship to U.S. born children of illegal immigrants would open a new battleground.

"If there is a policy tug of war between the [Trump chief strategist Stephen K.] Bannon faction and the [chief of staff Reince] Priebus faction … assuming those things even exist, there's still lots of hawkish people likely to be appointed in the various agencies," said Mark Krikorian, CIS executive director. Krikorian declined to comment about Feere.

"Personnel is policy, and the people getting the important policy positions in places like ICE, and Customs and Border Protection are likely to be pretty strong pro-enforcement people, as opposed to Bush administration leftovers," Krikorian said.

Feere and other critics of birthright citizenship have argued government action is needed due to the numbers of such children, and what they say is a rise of "birth tourism" and a phenomenon of "chain migration" in which U.S. citizens can sponsor immediate family members to come into the country.

When Congress considered legislation in 1995 to end automatic citizenship for children born to people who entered the U.S. illegally, opponents said it would contradict U.S. constitutional history and tradition and said the 14th Amendment established a "bright-line" principle that being born on American soil makes one a U.S. citizen.

The amendment was passed in response to the 1856 Dred Scott decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that found that no person of African descent could ever become a citizen, and was upheld in 1898 by the court in a challenge to the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited anyone of Chinese ancestry from remaining in the country.

Defending the principle in an NPR interview in 2010, former assistant attorney general and acting solicitor general Walter Dellinger traced it to America's racial history and immigrant identity.

"We believe on a clean slate principle" and that "whatever questions there are about the legitimacy of parents or grandparents, in our country, you get a clean slate," Dellinger said. "Every new child who is born here is simply and indisputably an American. And that is part of our almost unique national identity."

IG Probing Alleged DHS Snooping In Georgia Election Network

By Jennifer G. Hickey

Fox News, January 26, 2017

A government watchdog agency is investigating allegations that Department of Homeland Security officials improperly attempted to breach the Georgia secretary of state's internal elections network last year.

In a Jan. 17 letter to Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp, DHS Inspector General John Roth said his office was probing "a series of ten alleged scanning events of the Georgia Secretary of State's network" that may have originated from DHS-affiliated IP addresses.

DHS IG spokeswoman Erica Paulson confirmed the office has launched an investigation.

Georgia officials first went public with their allegations in December. According to a Dec. 8 letter from Kemp to then-Secretary Jeh Johnson, the state's third-party cybersecurity provider detected a "large unblocked scan event" on the morning of Nov. 15, several days after the election.

The alleged effort to penetrate the secretary of state's firewall was traced back to an IP address at DHS' Southwest D.C. office – and did not succeed in breaking through.

But DHS has argued that what Georgia detected was simply a contractor performing routine duties.

After a preliminary review of the incident, Johnson told Kemp that the workstation involved was used by a contractor with the Georgia-based Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC).

"We interviewed the contractor and he told us that he accessed your website as part of his normal job duties," said Johnson in a Dec. 12 response, in which he also denied that IP address was ever used to conduct security scans.

Johnson also said the contractor was not a member of DHS cybersecurity team and was only trying to determine whether contractors and new employees had certain professional licenses.

Unsatisfied by the explanation, Kemp, a member of DHS' federal election security task force, reached out to President Trump before he took office to request an IG probe into the Nov. 15 activity and nine other apparent attempts dating back to February 2016.

"Could it be normal web traffic that triggered a red flag? Sure, but when you look at the dates there are some

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interesting correlations between my calendar and when the contacts were made," Kemp told Fox News.

The nine other alleged incidents flagged by Kemp correspond to key election dates and times when Kemp was speaking out against DHS' plans to designate elections systems as "critical infrastructure."

The DHS officially classified the election system as "critical infrastructure" in early January. The move was not welcomed by many secretaries of state.

The designation is "legally and historically unprecedented" and raises "many questions and concerns for states and localities with authority over the administration of our voting process," the National Association of Secretaries of State said in a statement.

It's unclear whether the current IG probe, first reported by The Daily Caller, is being conducted at Trump's behest.

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, similarly asked the DHS inspector general to launch an inquiry. He further requested the department provide to his committee all of Johnson's correspondence with Kemp.

Chaffetz argued the intrusions, if true, "implicate state sovereignty laws" and constitutional laws.

According to Kemp, the IP address affiliated with the contractor was tied to scans of systems in Kentucky, West Virginia and Maine despite DHS' insistence that no authorized or unauthorized scans were conducted by that workstation.

Last September, DHS offered to provide states assistance with election security, including "cyber hygiene" scans designed to find any irregularities or vulnerabilities, but Georgia and several other states declined the offer.

Justice Department Fights Order To Preserve Ex-DHS Officials' Emails

By By Josh Gerstein

Politico, January 26, 2017

The Justice Department is asking a federal judge to reconsider an order requiring four former Department of Homeland Security officials, including ex-Secretary Jeh Johnson, to preserve many of their emails stored on private accounts.

Last week, two days before the inauguration of President Donald Trump, U.S. District Court Judge Randolph Moss ordered that Johnson and three former top DHS officials move messages they stored in online, personal accounts to thumb drives or hard drives for safekeeping.

Moss said he ordered the move out of "an abundance of caution" in connection with a Judicial Watch Freedom of Information Act lawsuit exploring the officials' use of personal email on government computers.

Justice Department lawyers opposed the preservation order, saying the officials already pledged to hang on to any potentially responsive emails in their accounts. On Thursday, federal government attorneys went back to Moss, asking him to reconsider the order.

The Justice Department attorneys said Moss "erred" when he said copying the officials' emails onto thumb drives wouldn't impact their privacy because they would be allowed to retain the drives.

"Although the Order has the individuals copying their e-mails onto thumb drives and maintaining those thumb drives, the mere existence of a second copy increases the risk that they will be exposed," government lawyers wrote in a motion filed Thursday.

The government also contends that the ex-officials don't know how to copy their messages.

"DHS's present understanding is that the former officials are not independently aware of how to transfer e-mails from a web-based account (i.e., Gmail) to a thumb drive and that DHS information technology staff who were consulted did not have any particular knowledge about how to transfer the e-mails, either," Justice Department attorneys wrote.

The filing suggests the ex-officials and DHS staff are also unsure about how to copy part of the private emails archives, since the suit sought only work-related emails between certain dates in 2013 and 2015.

If Moss won't lift his order, the Justice Department asked that he let the officials move the messages to encrypted DVDs instead of thumb drives or hard drives.

In arguing for the preservation order, Judicial Watch warned that failing to secure the emails before the end of the Obama administration risked repeating the ungainly effort to recover Hillary Clinton's emails after she left government in 2013. However, most of the officials involved had already quit by the time the issue reached judges in recent weeks.

The conservative watchdog group also won a similar order from another judge last week requiring a departing Justice Department official to preserve some of his private-account emails, if any contain potential federal records. Another group, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, obtained an order last month requiring the preservation of private-account emails belonging to a top White House science official.

Justice's filing Thursday was submitted under the name of Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division Joyce Branda. The Trump administration has yet to nominate a lawyer to head Justice's Civil Division.

Moss is an appointee of President Barack Obama.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Accused Colombian Drug Lord Says He Was Secretly Working For The Feds

By Jay Weaver

Miami Herald, January 26, 2017

When an elusive cocaine-trafficking suspect was finally extradited to Miami in November, federal prosecutors portrayed Henry De Jesus Lopez Londoño as one of Colombia's most "prolific drug dealers."

But what U.S. authorities did not mention was that Lopez Londoño had been recruited as a confidential informant — or "deep cover mole" —for two federal agencies, his lawyers say in court documents unsealed Thursday.

The defense depicts Lopez Londoño as a coveted government operative who made a deal with the feds and put his life on the line to help the war on drugs — including infiltrating a dangerous drug-trafficking cartel headed by Mexican kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, as well as paramilitary groups and members of the al-Qaida terrorist network in Colombia.

Saying he was promised "favorable treatment" by agents, Lopez Londoño's attorneys contend he provided them with inside information on the organizations, production plants, drug routes and cocaine shipments and claim his tips led to at least two major U.S. seizures. Although he is known in the trafficking underworld as "Mi Sangre" (My Blood), the court filings say, agents called him by his code name, "Assis."

The filings from his defense team, which had been out of public view until now, claim Lopez Londoño worked formally for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Drug Enforcement Administration as an undercover informant — for a period that covers most of the time he is accused of importing loads of cocaine into the United States.

The U.S. attorney's office in Miami confirmed that Lopez Londoño was once a "confidential source" for one agency, ICE, between August 2010 and February 2011, in a response also unsealed Thursday. But prosecutors said the DEA "never" formally used him as an informant. Prosecutors also dispute that he helped the feds throughout the time frame of his narco-trafficking indictment.

Lopez Londoño, charged with a half-dozen others on a single conspiracy charge of importing and distributing more than five kilos of cocaine between October 2006 and February 2012, is scheduled for trial in late October of this year. Four of his co-conspirators have already pleaded guilty and are cooperating as witnesses.

His lawyers say he signed agreements with ICE and then the DEA during meetings in Cartagena, Colombia, in 2009 and 2010. The agencies, according to court documents, also promised to provide his family with possible asylum in America — along with "favorable treatment for him once he came to the United States."

As a result of Lopez Londoño's "arrangement with ICE, he undertook infiltration assignments among Colombia's paramilitary organizations, at great personal risk, in order to uncover money laundering, drug and weapons trafficking activities in Colombia during the relevant periods of [his] indictment," his lawyers assert in court documents.

Lopez Londoño's lawyers have taken the strategic step of disclosing his once-secret role for the federal agencies in an effort to thwart his prosecution under a rare legal strategy known as the public authority defense. His lead defense attorney, Arturo V. Hernandez, argues in court papers that during the time his client is accused of breaking U.S. drug-trafficking laws, he was merely carrying out his assignments for government agents and therefore cannot be punished for any alleged misconduct.

Hernandez, who is seeking more government evidence about his client as well as federal grand jury minutes, asserts the indictment is "defective" and that the initial U.S. prosecutor on the case deliberately withheld the defendant's role as a government informant from that jury.

Asked about his client's disclosure on Thursday, Hernandez declined to comment, stating he "would litigate this case through the filed pleadings, not in the press."

An Argentine lawyer, who represented Lopez-Londoño in his fight against extradition to the United States, also criticized U.S. authorities for withholding information about his client's role as an informant for federal drug investigators. The defendant was arrested in Argentina in 2012.

"For four years, Mr. Lopez-Londoño fought the U.S. extradition request and the U.S. Government never once informed the Argentine judicial authorities that the defendant had, for a significant period of time, worked for the U.S. Government," attorney Daniel Fedel said in a statement. "Had this been confirmed, Mr. Lopez-Londoño would not have been extradited to the U.S."

According to his lawyers, Lopez-Londoño had fled from Colombia to Argentina in 2008 and would soon start working undercover for a series of federal agencies, requiring him to return to his homeland to infiltrate drug organizations.

They said he returned to Colombia a couple of months before he was indicted by a federal grand jury in February 2012, saying he feared for his life in his native country – not because of the conspiracy case in Miami. Prosecutors, however, said he absconded to Argentina after the indictment was filed in federal court.

Lopez-Londoño was a leader of the right-wing Colombian paramilitary group known as the AUC more than a decade ago, according to prosecutors. He later became a boss of the Urabeños gang in northern Colombia.

When police in Argentina arrested him in 2012, they said Lopez Londoño held passports from seven countries to evade capture, and that he had entered the country with a false passport while posing as a Venezuelan businessman. He sought asylum, but his petition was rejected, and after a fierce legal fight he was extradited to the U.S. four years later.

In his Miami case, Lopez Londoño filed an affidavit in which he said he first made contact with a U.S. agency in 2008 through a member of AUC. Agents with the Treasury Department, he said, wanted him to help investigate large drug trafficking and money laundering organizations in Colombia. He said the following year, he began his infiltration activities.

In 2009, he said he formalized his undercover work in meetings with agents from another U.S. agency, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, in Cartegena. "I became a documented informant for the U.S. law enforcement agents, and signed two separate contracts," he said in his affidavit unsealed on Thursday.

Lopez Londoño said during that period, he worked with five ICE agents and later with three DEA agents, while infiltrating and providing information on several targets – including the Guzman, Ubarbeños and Los Rastrojos organizations.

As a confidential informant, Lopez Londoño said he provided "extensive intelligence" on the structure of the organizations, cocaine production facilities, drug-trafficking routes, money-laundering activities, and the identities of high-ranking officials "engaged in political corruption" in Colombia, Venezuela and Argentina.

In addition, he said, "I have provided information that has led to at least two seizures of large quantities of cocaine."

Lopez Londoño said he also became aware in 2010 of an "internal conflict" between ICE and the DEA agents over who would be supervising his activities as a confidential informant. He said ICE agents told him to stop working with the DEA.

"Due to the close partnership of DEA with the Colombian police, I had ongoing concerns that my activities would become known to the Colombian police that I believed were corrupt and in the pay of the large cartels," Lopez Londoño said in the affidavit.

"If my activities on behalf of U.S. law enforcement had been leaked to the criminal cartels I was infiltrating," he said, "it would have cost me my life and possibly that of my family."

ICE Agent Raided Korean Restaurant In Exchange For Free Food From Rival, Lawsuit Claims

By Samantha Schmidt
Washington Post, January 26, 2017

In July 2013, Department of Homeland Security investigators raided a popular Las Vegas Korean supper club, detaining its employees for intense hours-long interrogations. According to a lawsuit, they were acting under orders of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement special agent, who portrayed it as a place of "prostitution and human trafficking."

Then, with no federal court order or approval from a judge, the ICE special agent forced the restaurant owner's then-fiancee to wear an electronic tracking device on her ankle for six months, claiming he had the legal authority to monitor her for "as long as he liked," a lawsuit by the club's owners alleges.

Authorities never found the owners of the restaurant, Club Yamang, responsible for the crimes. In fact, the lawsuit brought by those owners claims that ICE special agent Joohoon David Lee had been harassing the restaurant owners and employees in exchange for copious amounts of free food and drinks at a rival Las Vegas supper club, Club Sonagi, also popular for its Korean food, music and attractive hostesses. Lee and the owner of Club Sonagi "hatched a plan to drive Club Yamang out of business and into financial ruin" to benefit Club Sonagi, the lawsuit claims.

In return, Lee would allegedly consume expensive whiskey and food at Club Sonagi, generating tabs between $1,000 to $2,500 an evening, without ever having to pay up. The restaurant employees said it was commonly known that Lee would never be presented with a bill; all of his food and drinks were to be "comped."

"It started becoming more and more apparent to us that this thing was sort of shady all around," Paul Padda, a lawyer for the former restaurant owners and employees, said in an interview with The Washington Post.

Then, in May 2015, Lee was indicted in an unrelated bribery case in Los Angeles, pleading guilty months later. The details of the case "corroborated what we had sensed regarding Lee's ulterior motives," Padda said.

The restaurant's co-owners are now suing the federal government, seeking at least $100,000 each in damages for negligence and emotional distress caused by Lee's alleged harassment. The lawsuit, filed this month on behalf of three investors and co-owners and the now-wife of the former owner, comes after a similar lawsuit filed in April on behalf of the restaurant's former owner, Thomas Kim.

"The raid was not supported by legitimate reasons," the lawsuit states. "Instead it was based almost entirely upon SA Lee's representations and appeal to crass racial/ethnic stereotypes of Asian clubs as dens of prostitution and human trafficking, which SA Lee believed other government officials would be susceptible to believing."

On one evening a few weeks before the initial investigation at Club Yamang, Lee got drunk at Club Sonagi and boasted to some of the club's waitresses that he was going to "raid" Club Yamang, the lawsuit alleges. He made no

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secret of his status as a federal agent while eating at the restaurant.

Thomas Kim and his wife, Aeja Kim, did not learn until more than a year after the initial raid at their business that Lee's investigation was "a complete fabrication," the lawsuit alleged. By then, the damage was done. For months, Lee harassed Thomas, his employees and investors, they alleged. They alleged he placed Aeja Kim into a database that would flag her for questioning in airports — so each time she returned to the United States from a trip to her native South Korea, she would be detained for questioning for hours. "It was very deeply offensive to her," Padda, the lawyer, said. Two of the restaurant co-owners, a married couple, also ran into similar issues with ICE, Padda said.

"You can play on stereotypes to make people believe the worst about someone," Padda said. "It was a storm of all these things occurring."

Lee allegedly went to the apartment building of one of Thomas Kim's female employees and questioned her at length in the lobby of the complex, within earshot of other residents, about prostitution and illicit drug use. He told the woman, a naturalized citizen, that if she didn't cooperate with him she could lose her citizenship.

As a result of the allegations against it, Club Yamang's business took a significant hit. Thomas Kim told the Las Vegas Review Journal that the restaurant lost hundreds of thousands of dollars because of its damaged reputation.

"The word got out among people in the Asian community and potential customers," Padda said. "It was just not a place people wanted to go to."

The Kims became so frustrated by the constant surveillance and "stalking" — and the resulting blow to the business — that they moved to California two years ago, Padda said. Club Yamang is now under new ownership.

Meanwhile, Lee had become a target of the criminal bribery investigation in Los Angeles. In March 2012, Lee, then a special agent in the human trafficking unit of Homeland Security Investigations, interviewed a woman who claimed to be entering the United States to be a sex slave for a Korean businessman.

About a year after, Lee met with the businessman's attorney and told him that if he would pay for his trip, he would fly to Korea and interview the businessman and submit a positive report on his behalf.

A family member of the man traveled to Las Vegas to give Lee $3,000 in cash, according to court papers. One day later, Lee deposited $1,000 in his bank account and bought a plane ticket to Seoul, where his hotel and entertainment were also paid for by the businessman. Lee solicited a second bribe for $100,000 to make the "immigration issues go away." He eventually received about $6,000 to $8,000 in cash.

After returning to the United States, Lee filed an entry into a law enforcement database stating that although the businessman was suspected of human trafficking, the case was closed because of a lack of evidence. But after another agent alerted internal investigators about Lee's interference in another case, his record was investigated and he was charged with bribery

Lee pleaded guilty in December 2015 to one count of bribery. In July, he was sentenced to 10 months in prison by U.S. District Judge Michael W. Fitzgerald, who called the bribery "a very, very grave crime." Lee's former lawyer declined to comment when reached by The Post.

The case, however grave, was not isolated. A recently published review by the New York Times of thousands of court records and internal agency documents showed that over the last 10 years almost 200 employees and contract workers of the Department of Homeland Security have taken nearly $15 million in bribes.

According to the Associated Press, a massive hiring spree at U.S. Customs and Border Protection about a decade ago led the agency to balloon by nearly 8,000 agents in three years to more than 20,000 in 2009. The number of employees arrested for misconduct, such as civil rights violations or off-duty crimes like domestic violence, grew each year between 2007 and 2012, reaching 336, a 44 percent increase. Additionally, more than 100 employees were arrested or charged with corruption during the six-year span, including taking bribes to smuggle drugs or people.

The Kims' case, Padda said, is a "classic tale of abuse of power."

"What it does underscore is the tremendous power that federal agents have," Padda said, "and how one federal agent alone can really wreak havoc in a person's life."

Immigration Agents Attempt Arrest At Mission District Community Center

By Joe Rivano Barros

San Francisco Chronicle, January 26, 2017

Agents with Immigration and Customs Enforcement attempted to arrest two people suspected of being undocumented immigrants in the Mission District on Thursday morning, but left with no arrests made.

"ICE agents arrived to our center at about 9:20 a.m. this morning," said Mario Paz, the executive director of the Good Samaritan Resource Center at 1294 Potrero Ave. The center sits next to 20 units of housing at 1290 Potrero Ave., and Paz said the immigration agents were looking for two people there.

"An agent entered our center with two papers in hand and asked if two individuals lived here," he said. "Our staff responded that this is not a residency, that this is a community center."

The agents then said thank you and stepped outside, going to the apartment complex next door, he said. The

property manager was not in, Paz said, and a group of five agents waited for 10 minutes outside the complex before leaving.

Paz said it was no coincidence that the visit occurred the day after President Donald Trump threatened to cut federal funding for sanctuary cities like San Francisco. He said the visit was "sending out a message" to the city.

"Obviously this sort of rattled us, it rattled some of our staff," he said. "For me this is not necessarily a coincidence that this happened the day after the president's announcement…read more here

ICE Agents Appear At Family Center In SF's Mission District

By Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez

San Francisco Examiner, January 26, 2017

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents seeking an undocumented immigrant visited a home in San Francisco's Mission District on Thursday, but not before first stopping at a building housing a preschool next door by mistake, an agency spokesperson confirmed.

ICE's Bay Area-based Fugitive Operations Teams conducting "routine enforcement activities" went to the Good Samaritan Family Resource Center at 1290 Potrero Ave. in the Mission District at about 9 a.m. Thursday, trying to locate a convicted sex offender sought for deportation. ICE did not specify the nature of the sex offense.

The family resource center where the ICE agents first visited contains a preschool on site, where 30 toddlers and children played feet away from where ICE agents entered the center.

"They had batons, they had walkie talkies, they had police belts and vests on top of their black uniforms. I didn't notice if they had guns," said Jaime Aragon, services coordination manager at Good Samaritan.

ICE spokesperson Virginia Kice said the agents first went to the person's last known address and identified themselves as ICE officers, but were told the correct address was actually next door at the Good Samaritan-owned apartment building.

When the agents went next door, they did not find their target and left without making any arrests. Kice said such operations occur every day throughout the U.S.

"ICE's enforcement actions are targeted and lead driven, focusing on individuals who pose a threat to national security, border security, and public safety," Kice said in a statement.

Still, the incident sparked fear and outrage among immigration advocates in San Francisco

The incident, which former Supervisor David Campos called "unusual," came only a day after President Donald Trump signed two executive orders that — among other actions — called for 10,000 new ICE agents to perform deportations across the country.

Campos, who termed out in November, said he can't remember any ICE raids during his time as supervisor in the Mission District, a historically Latino neighborhood, and only a "couple of cases" where ICE was seeking someone for deportation.

"Trump just declared war on immigrants," Campos said. "This is very unusual."

Visiting a preschool and other sites containing children is prohibited for ICE under a 2011 Department of Homeland Security "sensitive locations" memorandum, save for exceptional circumstances.

A 2011 memorandum from then-Department of Homeland Security Director John Morton wrote that ICE agents "do not occur at nor are focused on sensitive locations such as schools and churches," including preschools.

However, the order is not intended to "categorically prohibit" operations at sensitive locations like schools, according to the memo, and exceptions include enforcement over a national security or terrorism matter; an imminent risk of death, violence or physical harm; the immediate arrest or pursuit of a dangerous felon or terrorist suspect; or imminent risk of destruction of evidence in an ongoing criminal case.

Mayor Ed Lee's spokesperson Deirdre Hussey said the incident Thursday is an example of how The City must continue to protect undocumented immigrants, even under the threat of losing federal funding by upholding its sanctuary city status.

"We encourage people to continue to visit their community based organization and get the services they need," Hussey said. "San Francisco is and will remain a sanctuary city."

Supervisor Hillary Ronen, whose district includes the Mission, echoed that sentiment.

"We don't want people to be unnecessarily afraid," Ronen said, adding that while this was an ICE appearance, "there has not been a raid."

"Take this time to review your rights," she said. A number of workshops for nonprofits and community members to review their immigration rights are scheduled for the next few weeks.

ICE Agents Descend On Mission's Good Samaritan Center : SFist

By Jay Barmann

SFist, January 26, 2017

The immigration crackdown has begun, and some ICE agents, possibly emboldened or directed by the new Trump regime, conducted a rare raid in San Francisco Thursday, descending upon the Good Samaritan Family Resource Center in the Mission. As the Examiner reports, agents say

they were seeking an individual for arrest and possible deportation, but they may have had the wrong address and no arrest was made. They were apparently looking for a person who lives in the center's housing complex next door.

As the Ex notes, the Good Samaritan complex includes a preschool, along with a health clinic and adult classrooms where English is taught, among other things, and immigration agents are not supposed to conduct raids at "sensitive locations" like schools, according to a 2011 Department of Homeland Security memorandum, except under exceptional circumstances. The only people at the center at the time of the raid, at 9 a.m., were thirty toddlers and their teachers at the preschool, and 20 Latino families who were just arriving for an ESL class.

In this case, five agents arrived with batons, and neighbors reported on Facebook that they heard a helicopter hovering as well. It remains unclear whom they were seeking, or if they proceeded to attempt an arrest elsewhere.

President Trump on Wednesday, as part of his executive order vowing punishments for Sanctuary Cities like San Francisco, promised to publish a weekly lists of crimes allegedly committed by undocumented immigrants in these cities. It is unclear whether local ICE agents already had some directive to detain one such alleged criminal. (Under the wording of the executive order, as CNN points out, undocumented people could be deported simply for being charged with a crime, even if they have not been convicted.)

The Ex spoke to former Mission District Supervisor David Campos who said he could only recall a "couple of cases" in which ICE went looking someone in the neighborhood for deportation, and no raids that occurred under his tenure as supervisor.

"My initial reaction was, 'Is this a change in policy?'" Campos told the paper. "Trump just declared war on immigrants. This is very unusual."

San Francisco already has provisions for the detention of undocumented criminals, and for turning them over to ICE for deportation if they have a serious felony conviction like murder or rape on their record within the past five years, or if they had a violent or serious felony conviction in the past seven years or three or more lesser felonies arising from different events in the past five years.

ICE Agents Arrive At San Francisco Nonprofit, Rattling Staff; Agents Were Seeking Nearby Sex Offender

By Matt Hamilton, Contact Reporter

Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2017

ICE agents arrived Thursday morning at a San Francisco nonprofit serving mostly low-income Latino immigrant families, rattling staffers and stoking fears about illegal immigration crackdowns under President Trump.

But though agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents did descend on the Good Samaritan Family Resource Center in the Mission District, immigration officials said it was not a raid but a targeted effort to find a convicted sex offender wanted for deportation.

The agents — with "ICE" in large letters on the back of their clothes — arrived about 9:20 a.m. at the center and lingered outside the building, according to Jaime Aragon, the organization's service coordination manager. After a few minutes, they entered and asked Aragon about people who lived there.

"I told them this is a family resource center. No one lives here — I can't help them," said Aragon, who directed the agents to a housing complex next door. The officer "thanked me and left."

Virginia Kice, an ICE spokeswoman, said that after learning the suspect's last address was actually next door, the agents promptly walked out. At the housing complex, the agents didn't find the person and left the area without making an arrest, Kice said.

ICE described the action by agents as routine — part of typical operations to track down specific individuals in the country illegally who pose a threat to public safety or national security.

"ICE deportation officers and special agents conduct operations every day in locations around the country," Kice said in a statement.

An ICE policy memorandum from 2011 calls on officers to avoid conducting actions at "sensitive locations," including schools, hospitals, churches and public demonstrations, and to use extra caution at organizations that help children and pregnant women.

To Aragon, who has worked at the nonprofit for seven years, the presence of federal immigration agents put him on edge.

"Nothing like this ever happened close to home. It was very jarring," Aragon said. "It took us by surprise. We know what to do and we are equipped to respond in an appropriate way, but it was still very disturbing."

The brief presence of ICE agents came just a day after Trump signed two executive orders designed to begin building a wall along the border with Mexico, add lockups for detaining immigrants who cross the border illegally, enhance enforcement powers for border agents and strip federal funding to cities that refuse to cooperate with immigration enforcement.

According to a draft document reviewed by The Times, under the new order, the federal government would threaten to withhold funds from so-called sanctuary cities that limit cooperation with immigration officials. San Francisco, like Los Angeles, is a sanctuary city, a broad policy aimed at welcoming those here illegally.

Staffers at Good Samaritan Family Resource Center hoped that the brief visit by ICE agents does not frighten away those who utilize their services: primarily low-income immigrant families. The organization provides child care, English classes, parenting groups and after-school programs.

Aragon said it was a small relief that the federal agents came at 9:20 a.m. The group has a large wave of English as a second language students who arrive at 9 a.m., usually with their children in tow.

"Everyone missed these officers by a hair," he said.

League City Woman Admits To Federal Child Pornography Charge

By Gabrielle Banks

Houston Chronicle, January 26, 2017

A League City woman pleaded guilty in Galveston Thursday to receiving child pornography via texts and online messaging.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

Border Patrol Chief Resigns After Clashing With Powerful Union

By Jerry Markon, Lisa Rein And Wesley Lowery

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

The chief of the U.S. Border Patrol has resigned after only six months on the job, one day after President Trump announced plans to ratchet up immigration enforcement and build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, officials said Thursday.

It was not immediately clear why Mark Morgan — a career FBI official who was the first outsider to lead the agency responsible for securing the U.S. borders — left the agency. His resignation is effective Jan. 31, officials said.

But Morgan had clashed with the powerful Border Patrol union, which endorsed Trump for president and whose leaders were present at Trump's announcement of his immigration crackdown at Department of Homeland Security headquarters Friday.

Gil Kerlikowske, former commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which oversees the Border Patrol, said in an interview that the union never supported Morgan for the job and appeared to be behind his departure.

"The union has been very vocal about someone from outside of the Border Patrol becoming the head of the Border Patrol," Kerlikowske said. "The union supported this candidate for president, and now very much appears to be directing things – which is absolutely unheard of in law enforcement. The union used their influence to have him removed.''

A few weeks after Trump's election, the conservative website Bretibart.com published an op-ed by the executive board of the National Border Patrol Council, which represents 16,500 agents. The piece was titled, "The chief Obama gave us is a disgrace." It criticized Morgan's leadership of the agency, in part latching onto a statement he made to members of Congress that said he supported "comprehensive immigration reform." The union called this a partisan view.

Union officials and Morgan could not immediately be reached for comment.

Kevin K. McAleenan, acting commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, praised Morgan "for his unwavering dedication to our border security mission" and "his lifelong career in service to the nation.'' His statement did not explain Morgan's departure.

The Border Patrol will have an important role in enforcing Trump's crackdown on the nation's estimated 11 million illegal immigrants. The president on Wednesday signed executive actions to order the construction of his controversial southwest border wall and cut off funds to cities that do not report undocumented immigrants to federal authorities. Trump also called for thousands of additional Border Patrol agents. There are now about 21,000.

Morgan, 52, started his career as a Los Angeles police officer before ascending the ranks of the FBI. Kerlikowske chose him for the Border Patrol job, overlooking others who came up through the ranks, to change what is considered, even by law enforcement standards, to be an insular culture. Many agents, including the Border Patrol union, opposed the selection at the time, saying an outsider could never gain agents' trust.

Morgan told The Washington Post in an interview last September that his first priority was to change the culture of the agency, which had for years faced allegations of an overly confrontational approach in its enforcement that resulted in multiple fatal shootings of illegal immigrants and a lack of accountability in investigating misconduct.

Morgan said he wanted to solve those problems. " It was a culture of not getting out and talking about the issues, not being transparent about the process and it drove the perception there was a culture problem," he told The Post.

Two years ago, Kerlikowske had brought Morgan over from the FBI to run the internal affairs office at the larger Customs and Border Protection agency after removing the longtime official in the job. That official had been criticized for failing to investigate multiple allegations that Border Patrol agents had used excessive force on migrants. Morgan was then promoted to run the Border Patrol in July.

During his short tenure, Morgan enforced new use-of-force policies in the agency's training academy curriculum that encouraged recruits to turn to other strategies to defuse encounters that could get violent. He was working with agents to help them develop better intelligence on drug cartels and smugglers behind illegal border crossings, and was also

CBP FOIA000443

seeking to create a system to better review cases in which agents fire their weapons.

Law enforcement officials describe Morgan — who was a career, not political appointee — as a careerist, as opposed to being a political partisan.

"He's not a political guy," said Jim Pasco, executive director the nation Fraternal Order of Police. "I've never heard a bad thing about him – and I work for a union, we hear bad things about everyone."

U.S. Border Patrol Chief Ousted From Job

By Stephen Dinan

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

Border Patrol Chief Mark Morgan will be leaving job, the agency announced Thursday, after just seven months on the job.

His departure comes just a day after President Trump issued a broad set of new directives to Border Patrol agents to step up enforcement of existing laws.

Customs and Border Protection announced the move in a brief statement thanking Chief Morgan for his long government service, including 20 years in the FBI

His last day will be Jan. 31.

Chief Morgan made news last year when he disagreed with the Obama administration's stance on the new illegal immigrant surge, saying lax enforcement policies were enticing more migrants to attempt to breach the border.

He also said he was having to pull his trained agents off their duties to act as "child care providers" for the children being nabbed at the border.

No reason was given for Chief Morgan's departure, but he has tangled with the National Border Patrol Council, the labor union that represents line agents. The NBPC had wanted to see someone promoted from within the ranks, rather than someone from another law enforcement agency put in the leadership post.

The NBPC has become a powerful political force after endorsing Mr. Trump in the presidential election.

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U.S. Border Patrol Chief Morgan Asked To Leave The Agency: Sources

By Julia Edwards Ainsley

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

AP Source: Border Patrol Chief Says He's Been Forced Out

By Elliot Spagat And Alicia A. Caldwell

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – The man charged with protecting America's borders was ousted Thursday, one day after President Donald Trump announced ambitious plans to build a massive wall at the Mexican border and bolster the ranks of the Border Patrol.

Border Patrol Chief Mark Morgan said he was asked to leave and decided to resign rather than fight the request, according to a U.S. official who was on brief video conference in which Morgan informed senior agents of the change.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the discussion was not intended to be made public.

The forced resignation leaves Trump with a leadership gap but also gives him a chance to start fresh with a Border Patrol chief of his own choosing.

Border security and a "big beautiful wall" paid for by the Mexican government were centerpieces of Trump's immigration platform during his presidential campaign. Mexico has repeatedly said it won't pay for a barrier, and Mexican president Enrique Pena Nieto on Thursday cancelled a meeting with Trump.

Morgan was named to the post in June and took office in October. The former FBI agent briefly led the internal affairs department at the Border Patrol's parent agency before heading the agency of roughly 20,000 agents.

His removal wasn't a surprise. From the start, Morgan clashed with the Border Patrol's union, which had advocated for an insider to lead the agency and sharply criticized Morgan at almost every turn.

The union was incensed when Morgan, at a Senate hearing Dec. 1, said he supported a comprehensive immigration overhaul, which is often interpreted to include a path to citizenship for people who are in the country illegally. Morgan clarified his remarks in a note to Border Patrol staff the following week, saying he does not support a "blanket amnesty."

The union, the National Border Patrol Council, has had a strong relationship with Trump. It was so enamored with his stance on security that it took the unusual step of endorsing him during the campaign. The endorsement was a leadership decision and not decided on by a unionwide vote. Union chief Brandon Judd was part of Trump's transition team.

When Trump visited the Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday, he singled out Judd while pointedly avoiding mention of Morgan. Morgan was not at the event.

Despite pressure from the union, many agency officials said Morgan appeared to embrace the job. Less than a week ago, the first message on his new Twitter account read, "Chief Morgan here – excited to use this account to share the latest news and events of the #BorderPatrol with followers."

Deputy Chief Carla Provost, who has been with the agency since 1995, will be the agency's acting chief, according to an internal memo to agents in the Border Patrol's Tucson office that was obtained by the AP.

Morgan's ouster occurred amid a shakeup across the agencies of government.

The State Department on Thursday said several senior management officials as well as a top arms control diplomat would be leaving. All had submitted resignations before Trump became president as required of officials holding president-appointed jobs. But they weren't required to leave the foreign service.

Spagat reported from San Diego.

Follow Elliot Spagat on Twitter at www.twitter.com/elliotspagat and Alicia A. Caldwell at www.twitter.com/acaldwellap

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Border Patrol Chief, An Agency Outsider, Is Stepping Down

By Ron Nixon

New York Times, January 26, 2017

Mark Morgan, who has led the United States Border Patrol for just a few months, will leave the agency just days after President Trump announced plans to increase the number of agents, according to a statement Thursday from Customs and Border Protection, which oversees the agency.

Mr. Morgan told senior Border Patrol officials that he had been asked to resign, said one official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to speak to the news media. The official described staff members as shocked.

Mr. Morgan's last day at the agency, which has more than 20,000 agents and is responsible for border security, is Tuesday. He could not be reached for comment.

Mr. Morgan had expressed a desire to stay at the agency in the Trump administration, a Department of Homeland Security official said.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk about internal staffing issues, said Mr. Morgan had sent an internal email to Border Patrol staff members after the election criticizing the immigration enforcement policies of President Barack Obama and his Homeland Security secretary, Jeh C. Johnson.

The official said it appeared to be an attempt by Mr. Morgan to please the incoming administration, which had made border security a key campaign platform.

Mr. Morgan, a former F.B.I. agent, was appointed chief in June and took over in October. He was the first chief in the agency's 93-year history who had never worked as a border patrol agent. He had led the internal affairs office at Customs and Border Protection before taking over the Border Patrol.

His appointment drew criticism from the National Border Patrol Council, the union for Border Patrol workers, which said an insider should have been appointed to head the agency.

The union endorsed Mr. Trump during the election, and the union's president, Brandon Judd, also served on Mr. Trump's transition team.

Shawn Moran, a union spokesman, declined to comment on Mr. Morgan's departure.

In announcing a crackdown on illegal immigration in a speech at the Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday, Mr. Trump took care to praise the union's president and the Border Patrol, which had members in the front rows.

Mr. Trump also praised Immigration and Customs Enforcement, whose union also endorsed him. One executive order Mr. Trump signed on Wednesday will add 5,000 new agents to the Border Patrol and reverse several Obama-era policies that agents say impaired their ability to secure the border.

The president did not single out other services in attendance for praise, such as the Transportation Security Administration or Coast Guard.

R. Gil Kerlikowske, who stepped down as the commissioner of Customs and Border Protection last week and who appointed Mr. Morgan to head the border patrol, said he was not surprised by Mr. Morgan's departure, given the union opposition to his hiring.

"They were very vocal about an outsider coming in, even with his credentials as a police officer, deputy sheriff," Mr. Kerlikowske said. "It's very concerning to have a union making those kinds of decisions."

Customs and Border Protection did not say who would replace Mr. Morgan. During the presidential campaign, Joseph Arpaio, the former sheriff of Maricopa County in Arizona, who clashed with the Obama administration over his illegal immigration raids, was mentioned as a possible replacement.

The Border Patrol has come under scrutiny for what some critics say is an inability to discipline officers and for policies concerning the use of force. A cross-border shooting in which a border agent shot and killed a Mexican boy in 2012 caused a diplomatic row with Mexico.

Dozens of Border Patrol agents have been arrested in recent years on corruption charges, including taking bribes to allow drugs and illegal immigrants to enter the country.

Montini: Will Trump Tap Arpaio To Head Border Patrol?

By EJ Montini

Arizona Republic, January 26, 2017

Even before he took office were those in Donald Trump's transition team who wanted the president to hire dethroned Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio to head the border patrol.

Now, he has his chance.

The head of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Mark Morgan, has resigned.

We all know how much Trump like Arpaio. And vice versa.

ADVERTISING

The former sheriff was Trump's earliest nationally known political backer. He loves the idea of the wall. He got into trouble for too aggressively (and illegally) rounding up suspected illegal immigrants. He appeared with Trump on the campaign trail number times and spoke at the Republican National Convention.

Sure, he has that little problem of a federal criminal contempt trial for defying a judge's order that his deputies stop targeting Latinos.

But, hey, Arpaio has worn that charge like a badge of honor.

And has been praised for it by Trump backers.

Like Willian Gheen, president of the Americans for Legal Immigration PAC, who said of Arpaio, "The American public is very thankful that Sheriff Joe Arpaio has stood up to the Obama administration and all of the power groups that are backing the illegal immigrant invasion of America."

In our old universe – the one that existed prior to Trump's election – it would have been considered inappropriate and best and political suicide at worst to appoint someone to such a position while that person is facing a criminal trial.

But we don't live in that world anymore.

And that last thing that we would be if Trump tapped Arpaio to head the border patrol is … surprised.

Border Patrol Chief Out One Day After Trump Wall Announcement

By Paulina Firozi

The Hill, January 26, 2017

The U.S. Border Patrol Chief Mark Morgan has reportedly left the agency a day after President Trump signed an executive order to build a wall on the Mexican border.

The Associated Press report, citing current and former U.S. officials, said Morgan was no longer in his post, though it was not clear if he resigned or was asked to leave.

Trump promised during his presidential campaign that he would build a wall on the Mexican border and that Mexico would pay for it.

In signing the order, he fulfilled part of the pledge, though it does not appear that Mexico will pay for it.

"This is a law enforcement agency," Trump said during his announcement following the order during a visit to the Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday."But for too long, your offices and agents haven't been allowed to properly do their jobs.

"From here on out, I'm asking all of you to enforce the laws of the United States of America. They will be enforced and enforced strongly."

Mexico's president has canceled a planned meeting with Trump because of Trump's actions on the border.

Border Patrol Chief, Who Once Backed Immigration Reform, Removed From Office

Fox News, January 26, 2017

The Border Patrol chief has been removed from office, a day after President Trump signed an executive order to build a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border and hire 5,000 more agents, sources confirmed to Fox News Thursday.

The Associated Press first reported Thursday that Mark Morgan told senior Border Patrol agents that he was asked to leave, and said he had chosen to resign rather than fight the removal request.

Morgan was named to the post in June and took office in October. His hiring had caused concern among the rank-and-file as he was not a former agent himself.

Sources told Fox News that the latest move was to show that Customs and Border Protection is going in a new, and more aggressive, direction.

Morgan's last day will be Jan. 31 and sources said a new chief has already been identified. Sources say he is more in line with the Trump administration on border issues.

In a statement, Kevin McAleenan, the Customs and Border Protection's acting commissioner, praised Morgan for "his unwavering dedication to our border security mission" and "lifelong career in service to the nation."

The White House released a statement saying that the post is a political appointment and therefore "all officers understand the President may choose to replace them at any time."

"No officer accepts a political appointment with the expectation that it is unlimited," the statement said.

Morgan had clashed frequently with the Border Patrol union, which backed Trump and criticized Morgan frequently. The union was infuriated when Morgan told a Senate hearing in December that he supported a comprehensive immigration overhaul – assumed to include a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants.

Morgan later clarified his statement sying he did not support "blanket amnesty" and encouraged union members to listen to his testimony.

Agency officials told The Associated Press that Morgan appeared to embrace the job. Less than a week ago, the first message on his new Twitter account read, "Chief Morgan here – excited to use this account to share the latest news and events of the #BorderPatrol with followers."

Border Patrol Chief Resigns After Clashing With Powerful Union

By Jerry Markon, Lisa Rein, Wesley Lowery

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

The chief of the U.S. Border Patrol has resigned after only six months on the job, one day after President Trump announced plans to ratchet up immigration enforcement and build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, officials said Thursday.

It was not immediately clear why Mark Morgan — a career FBI official who was the first outsider to lead the agency responsible for securing the U.S. borders — left the agency. His resignation is effective Jan. 31, officials said.

But Morgan had clashed with the powerful Border Patrol union, which endorsed Trump for president and whose leaders were present at Trump's announcement of his immigration crackdown at Department of Homeland Security headquarters Friday.

Gil Kerlikowske, former commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which oversees the Border Patrol, said in an interview that the union never supported Morgan for the job and appeared to be behind his departure.

"The union has been very vocal about someone from outside of the Border Patrol becoming the head of the Border Patrol," Kerlikowske said. "The union supported this candidate for president, and now very much appears to be directing things – which is absolutely unheard of in law enforcement. The union used their influence to have him removed.''

A few weeks after Trump's election, the conservative website Bretibart.com published an op-ed by the executive board of the National Border Patrol Council, which represents 16,500 agents. The piece was titled, "The chief Obama gave us is a disgrace." It criticized Morgan's leadership of the agency, in part latching onto a statement he made to members of Congress that said he supported "comprehensive immigration reform." The union called this a partisan view.

Morgan could not immediately be reached for comment.

Union spokesman Shaun Moran said he was under orders not to discuss the union's role in Morgan's departure.

But responding to Kerlikowske's comments, Moran said: "We supported President Trump because he was the only candidate who talked about taking action on border security. His actions over the past few days show it was not just campaign rhetoric, but a true conviction to protect Americans from the dangers of illegal immigration."

He accused Kerlikowske of rolling back enforcement operations and "preventing agents from doing their jobs."

"Gil Kerlikowske had multiple opportunities to work with the union to help protect Americans. He chose not to do so."

Kevin K. McAleenan, acting commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, praised Morgan "for his unwavering dedication to our border security mission" and "his lifelong career in service to the nation.'' His statement did not explain Morgan's departure.

The Border Patrol will have an important role in enforcing Trump's crackdown on the nation's estimated 11 million illegal immigrants. The president on Wednesday signed executive actions to order the construction of his controversial southwest border wall and cut off funds to cities that do not report undocumented immigrants to federal authorities. Trump also called for thousands of additional Border Patrol agents. There are now about 21,000.

Brandon Judd, president of the National Border Patrol Council, was standing behind Trump as the president signed Wednesday's executive order on border security. Morgan was not. And in his speech to DHS employees, Trump called on Judd to stand and be recognized.

Morgan, 52, started his career as a Los Angeles police officer before ascending the ranks of the FBI. Kerlikowske chose him for the Border Patrol job, overlooking others who came up through the ranks, to change what is considered, even by law enforcement standards, to be an insular culture. Many agents, including the Border Patrol union, opposed the selection at the time, saying an outsider could never gain agents' trust.

Morgan told The Washington Post in an interview last September that his first priority was to change the culture of the agency, which had for years faced allegations of an overly confrontational approach in its enforcement that resulted in multiple fatal shootings of illegal immigrants and a lack of accountability in investigating misconduct.

Morgan said he wanted to solve those problems. " It was a culture of not getting out and talking about the issues, not being transparent about the process and it drove the perception there was a culture problem," he told The Post.

Two years ago, Kerlikowske had brought Morgan over from the FBI to run the internal affairs office at the larger Customs and Border Protection agency after removing the longtime official in the job. That official had been criticized for failing to investigate multiple allegations that Border Patrol agents had used excessive force on migrants. Morgan was then promoted to run the Border Patrol in July.

During his short tenure, Morgan enforced new use-of-force policies in the agency's training academy curriculum

CBP FOIA000447

that encouraged recruits to turn to other strategies to defuse encounters that could get violent. He was working with agents to help them develop better intelligence on drug cartels and smugglers behind illegal border crossings, and was also seeking to create a system to better review cases in which agents fire their weapons.

Law enforcement officials describe Morgan — who was a career, not political appointee — as a careerist, as opposed to being a political partisan.

"He's not a political guy," said Jim Pasco, executive director the nation Fraternal Order of Police. "I've never heard a bad thing about him – and I work for a union, we hear bad things about everyone."

Border Patrol Chief Is Abruptly Out After Being Brought In As A Reformer

By Brian Bennett

Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2017

The chief of the Border Patrol will leave his post at the end of the month, likely the result of a change in direction by the Trump administration and a reflection of the new power of the agency's union.

Mark Morgan, the agency's head, was hired from the FBI in June to reform the force after a series of corruption allegations and problems with excessive force. He will leave the Border Patrol abruptly after seven months on the job, according to a person familiar with the decision who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Morgan's departure was first reported by the Associated Press.

Morgan spent 20 years at the FBI and was first brought to Customs and Border Protection, the Border Patrol's parent agency, in 2014 to overhaul its internal affairs division. After a subsequent stint running the FBI's training academy, he started the top job at the Border Patrol in June.

The Border Patrol's union had opposed Morgan's appointment, preferring a candidate who had risen through the ranks of the agency.

The union endorsed President Trump in the election, breaking with its practice of remaining neutral in elections.

News of Morgan's departure comes a day after Trump announced he would build a border wall and hire 5,000 more Border Patrol agents, bringing the total force to 26,000. Trump said the Border Patrol union would have a lot of clout in department decisions.

Head Of Border Patrol Union Weighs In On Trump's Wall Plans : NPR

NPR, January 26, 2017

The U.S. Border Patrol agents' union backed Donald Trump's candidacy. Steve Inskeep talks with union leader Brandon Judd about the president's executive action on a border wall and sanctuary cities.

STEVE INSKEEP, HOST:

When President Trump spoke to people at the Department of Homeland Security yesterday, Brandon Judd was in the audience. He's president of the union that represents U.S. Border Patrol agents, the National Border Patrol Council, which endorsed Trump during the campaign. He was present to hear the president say he's going ahead with building a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, among other immigration measures, and he's in our studio this morning. Mr. Judd, welcome back to the program.

BRANDON JUDD: Good morning, Steve.

INSKEEP: So how different is the border going to be assuming that the president's orders are carried out here?

JUDD: I don't think it's going to be – well, OK, it's going to be a lot more secure. But what we're talking about is we're talking about a wall in strategic locations. We're not talking about a great wall of the United States. We're not talking about a continuous wall from California down to Texas. We're talking about a wall in strategic locations which then helps the Border Patrol agents do their job better.

INSKEEP: Because there are some places that are so sparsely populated and the ground is so fierce or so harsh you really don't need...

JUDD: Correct, correct.

INSKEEP: So you've told us when you were on the program last time that about 10 to 15 percent of the border has serious fences in your view and maybe you'd double that under this proposal.

JUDD: That's what I'm thinking. Again, I don't have the exact specifics of what they're going to do, but I do know that they're looking in specific places like Laredo, Texas, where we have very, very little walls. Yet, the state that Laredo, Texas, borders is extremely violent. And so we're looking in locations like that. They're looking in locations like that, but I think it's going to be very effective.

INSKEEP: What have you made of the really visceral response to this, the negative response to this from many people in the United States as well as from Mexico?

JUDD: Well, I can understand, but you – but, Steve, you have to understand there's a lot of rhetoric out there and a lot of what's being put out there – I mean, I've heard that this is a racist wall. This isn't a racist wall. We're not talking about keeping out legal immigrants. We're talking about keeping out illegal immigrants, and it has nothing to do with race because we get people from all – from everywhere. We get people from Russia who are white that cross the border illegally. And so this isn't a racist wall. This is about the security and safety of the United States.

INSKEEP: Although some people have pointed out nobody is talking about a wall on the Canadian border.

JUDD: No, but we don't have the same problems on the Canadian border. In fact, that's where I work right now. I work on the Canadian border, and we just don't have the same number of people crossing the Canadian border illegally like what we do on the southwest border. It's a lot cheaper to go down to Mexico and cross the southwest border.

INSKEEP: What do you think about the president's effort to compel, if he can, local and state authorities to be more helpful to the Border Patrol and immigration authorities in doing their jobs and rounding up people who are here illegally?

JUDD: Well – so my understanding is that he's not compelling them to help us round them up. But what he is saying is if they come in contact, if a police officer, say, from Phoenix Police Department – if a police officer from the Phoenix, Ariz., police department comes in contact with somebody that he knows is here or suspects that is here illegally, then his responsibility is to contact an immigration enforcement officer to come in and find out. It's the same with me. As a Border Patrol agent, if I make a vehicle stop and I find that illegal activity is taking place outside of the laws that I enforce...

INSKEEP: Drunk driver for example.

JUDD: Exactly – it's my responsibility to call the local law – the local law enforcement so that they can come out and take care of the problem.

INSKEEP: Are we not actually arguing about that much then? Because there are local authorities who are saying, yeah, yeah, if we find somebody who's obviously in violation, we have to turn them over, but we do not want to make that our job. We don't want it to be our job to seek them out or to hold people when otherwise there would not be reason to hold them.

JUDD: And it's not going to be their job. It's not going to be their job to go seek out illegal immigrants in the United States. That is immigrations officers' jobs and it's not theirs. But if they do come in contact with people that are in the country illegally, they should have a responsibility and duty to report people that are breaking the law.

INSKEEP: In a few seconds, how different do you think the country could be in three or four years if these proposals are carried out?

JUDD: Well, I think the country is going to be a lot safer.

INSKEEP: A lot safer.

JUDD: I really do, yes, absolutely. I mean, I was there with what they call the angel families, families that had children that were killed by persons that were in the United States illegally. If these laws are carried out properly – and he's not talking about new laws. By the way, he's not saying that he's going to give us new laws. He's talking about enforcing the laws that are currently on the books.

INSKEEP: Brandon Judd, thanks for coming by. I really appreciate it.

JUDD: Appreciate it, thank you.

INSKEEP: He is the head of the Border Patrol union.

Head Of Border Patrol Union Says Misplaced Agents Delaying Security Measures

By Matthew Wisner

Yahoo! News, January 26, 2017

At the Department of Homeland Security Wednesday, President Trump announced plans to begin work on a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border as well as hire 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents. Border Patrol Union President Brandon Judd appeared on the FOX Business Network Thursday and explained why he feels 5,000 agents is enough to secure the border.

"It is enough. In fact, if we were able to put all the agents that we currently have on the border, we would be able to secure the border given that we get the additional technology such as the wall," Judd told the FOX Business Network's Stuart Varney.

The issue, according to Judd, is that many patrol agents are assigned to duties other than securing the border.

"We have agents that are in [a] PR department for the agency, we have agents doing labor-employee relations instead of actually on the border, securing the border."

On the other hand, Judd explained that if the administration decides to keep those agents at their current positions, the additional 5,000 agents would be necessary.

"If the agency determines that those individuals are needed in the places that they're at, then we do need that additional 5,000 agents in order to secure the border."

Border Patrol Agent's Radio Blocks Knife In Struggle Near Tucson

By Carmen Duarte

Arizona Daily Star, January 26, 2017

A Border Patrol agent struggled with an undocumented immigrant who attempted to stab the agent, but instead struck a handheld radio, authorities said.

The incident occurred shortly after 9 p.m. Tuesday near Three Points, according to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection news release.

The struggling agent received help from another agent who was in an Air and Marine Operations helicopter that landed in a clearing.

The suspect was arrested.

The incident began after the helicopter crew responded to a report of about 10 migrants walking in the desert near Three Points. The air crew spotted the group and was guiding Border Patrol agents on the ground toward the group's location, authorities said.

The air crew reported seeing one man fleeing from the group. A Border Patrol agent made contact with the man and both began to struggle.

During the struggle, the man pulled out a knife and tried to stab the agent, but struck the agent's handheld radio. The radio was attached to the agent's body armor, authorities said.

The agent called for help while struggling with the man. Once the helicopter landed, another agent went to his aid and both restrained and arrested the man, said authorities.

Border Patrol Agent Assaulted, Nearly Stabbed

By Hannah Palaniuk

KVOA-TV Tucson (AZ), January 26, 2017

THREE POINTS – A man attempted to stab a United States Border Patrol agent Tuesday night, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The man was part of a group of migrants walking through the desert near Three Points.

An Air and Marine Operations helicopter was guiding agents on the ground to the migrants' location, according to CBP.

The man tried fleeing the scene.

An agent ran after him and "a struggle ensued," according to CBP.

During the struggle, the man pulled out a knife and attempted to stab the agent, according to CBP.

The agent's hand-held radio attached to his body armor blocked the knife.

The AMO helicopter landed nearby and the co-pilot helped the agent subdue the man, according to CBP.

The man was arrested.

Border Patrol Agent Charged In Millcreek Crashes

By Tim Hahn

Erie (PA) Times-News, January 26, 2017

An incident in Millcreek Township earlier this month in which police said two moving vehicles were run into and one of the drivers was run over involved a U.S. Border Patrol agent stationed locally.

The agent, 43-year-old Norman A. Antuzzi, of Millcreek Township, is scheduled to appear in court Feb. 21 to face 13 misdemeanor and summary charges related to a series of crashes that township police accuse Antuzzi of causing while traveling through Millcreek, while off-duty, on the afternoon of Jan. 14.

Antuzzi is free on $50,000 unsecured bond in the case following his arraignment by Harborcreek Township District Judge Mark Krahe on Jan. 19. His job status as a local Border Patrol agent was unknown Thursday afternoon.

Antuzzi's lawyer, Stephen Sebald, said Thursday afternoon that Antuzzi is currently in an inpatient treatment setting, in a special program to help people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Millcreek police charge in the criminal complaint that Antuzzi, while driving a Subaru Impreza, ran into the back of a Honda Accord while both vehicles were traveling east on Young Road. The driver of the Honda told police he attempted to pull over when the Subaru struck his vehicle from behind a second time before the Subaru continued traveling east, with the driver appearing to be yelling at the Honda driver, Millcreek police Patrolman Michael Fitzgerald wrote in the affidavit of probable cause accompanying the criminal complaint.

Police charge that Antuzzi then struck a Dodge Caravan at the intersection of Arbuckle and Old French roads, backed up and rammed the van a second time. The 83-year-old driver of the van got out, approached Antuzzi's vehicle and attempted to open the door. Antuzzi pushed the door into the man, knocking him backward, then turned his vehicle left and intentionally struck the other driver, knocking him to the ground and running over his left foot, Fitzgerald wrote in the affidavit.

The van driver and his 79-year-old wife were both taken to Saint Vincent Health Center for treatment.

Investigators said they traced the license plate on the Subaru to Antuzzi's residence, where they spotted the Subaru in the garage but did not get a response when they knocked on the door. Antuzzi called Millcreek police the next day, and when Fitzgerald asked him what happened the day before Antuzzi replied that he did not remember, according to the affidavit.

According to a statement released by the U.S. Border Patrol on Thursday afternoon, Antuzzi was notified by Millcreek police on Jan. 19 to appear in district court for his initial appearance regarding several traffic incidents he was reportedly involved in on Jan. 14 while in an off-duty capacity. The U.S. Border Patrol, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Office of Professional Responsibility, are fully cooperating with local authorities handling the case, according to the statement.

Officials also wrote in the statement that Customs and Border Protection does not tolerate the misconduct of any employee, and stresses the importance of maintaining the highest levels of professionalism and integrity throughout the organization.

The Border Patrol has had a presence in Erie since the agency was founded in the 1920s, but became a fixture in the community when a station was opened on Erie's bayfront in 2004. The agents assigned to Erie, the exact number of which is not released, now work out of a facility off Route 98 in Fairview Township that opened in 2010. The agency is charged primarily with protecting U.S. borders from terrorists

and weapons of mass production, and agents in Erie cover an area stretching from western New York to eastern Ohio.

The Jan. 14 incident wasn't Antuzzi's first run-in with local law enforcement over his driving habits.

Edinboro police charged Antuzzi with driving under the influence, and with summary traffic violations including speeding and careless driving, following another off-duty incident that happened on West Plum Street in the borough on the early morning of Aug. 14. According to information in the criminal complaint filed by Edinboro police Patrolman Jerry Lawrence, the officer was on routine patrol when another vehicle sped up to his police cruiser from behind, driving right up to the bumper, before passing the patrol car on the left side.

Lawrence wrote in the affidavit of probable cause accompanying the complaint that he stopped Antuzzi's vehicle and gave him three field sobriety tests, which Antuzzi failed.

"The driver, Norman Antuzzi, told this officer that he could not do the tests because he was drunk," Lawrence wrote in the affidavit.

Antuzzi was then taken to the Edinboro police station and was given a breathalyzer test, which showed positive results for alcohol, according to the affidavit.

Antuzzi was charged by summons in the case. He waived the charges to court at his Sept. 29 preliminary hearing before McKean District Judge Denise Stuck-Lewis, and he was released with no bond set.

Antuzzi waived his formal arraignment in the case in November and has applied for Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition, a program that grants probation to nonviolent, first-time offenders in Erie County, according to court documents.

Border Patrol Agents Arrest Italian Felon

Sonoran News (AZ), January 26, 2017

TUCSON – An Italian man identified as Salvatore Marciante, 56, was apprehended in Nogales, Arizona, on Jan. 21 for being illegally present in the United States.

Criminal and immigration checks revealed that Marciante previously resided in Staten Island, New York and was deported from the United States in 2004 after serving time for involvement in drug related criminal activity.

Marciante is being prosecuted for illegal re-entry of a felon, as per Tucson Sector guidelines.

Federal law allows the Border Patrol to charge individuals by complaint, a method that allows the filing of charges for criminal activity without inferring guilt. An individual is presumed innocent unless and until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Customs and Border Protection welcomes assistance from the community. Citizens can report suspicious activity to the Border Patrol and remain anonymous by calling 1-877-872-7435 toll free.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

White House Security Adviser Facing Gun Charge In Virginia

Former Breitbart editor Sebastian Gorka was stopped at Reagan National Airport

By Shane Harris

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

TSA Adds 11 New Airlines To PreCheck Program

By Melanie Zanona

The Hill, January 26, 2017

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has ramped up its expedited screening program to include 11 new airlines, the agency announced Thursday.

The TSA's PreCheck program will now be available for eligible passengers flying on Aruba Airlines, Avianca, Boutique Airlines, Emirates, Key Lime Air, Miami Air International, Southern Airways Express, Spirit Airlines, Sunwing, Virgin Atlantic and Xtra Airways.

The latest expansion brings the total number of airlines participating in PreCheck to 30.

"Partnering with 11 additional airlines to offer TSA PreCheck will significantly increase our trusted traveler population, and reflects our commitment to implement the most effective aviation security," said TSA acting Administrator Huban A. Gowadia. "By collaborating with our partners in industry and the aviation community, we will continue to increase the number of airlines participating in TSA PreCheck, enabling more eligible travelers across the country to experience expedited screening."

The screening program allows passengers who have undergone background checks to move through expedited security lanes without taking off their shoes or removing electronics from their bags. The enrollment fee is $85 and lasts for five years.

TSA officials have relied on PreCheck to help improve security and ease massive airport security lines, which caused major headaches for passengers and officials last spring.

PreCheck initially ran into trouble after the agency overestimated how many passengers would sign up for the program and cut screening staff in anticipation of enrollment.

CBP FOIA000451

But former TSA Administrator Peter Neffenger quickly began raising public awareness about the program, while Congress passed an aviation bill last summer designed to further boost enrollment.

As a result, PreCheck enrollment spiked over the last year, with average daily sign-ups in 2016 double what they were in 2015.

An increasing number of companies also began to reimburse their employees for the program, while some air carriers started allowing travelers to purchase PreCheck with airline points.

Spirit Airlines Joins TSA PreCheck

By Susan Glaser

Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 26, 2017

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Spirit Airlines today joined the Transportation Security Administration's PreCheck program, which allows pre-screened passengers to avoid long lines at airport security.

Effective immediately, passengers who are already enrolled in TSA PreCheck can use the service when flying on Spirit.

"We are thrilled to give our customers options for a more efficient and expedited security screening experience," John Bendoraitis, chief operating officer and senior vice president of Spirit, said in a statement.

Spirit was the last major U.S. airline to offer the program to its customers.

In previous interviews, Spirit officials cited both the cost of participating in PreCheck and factors related to the airline's reservation system for the delay. Those problems, apparently, have been resolved.

For travelers not enrolled in PreCheck, Bendoraitis noted that the airline offers a program called Shortcut Security, for an extra fee, at some airports, including Cleveland Hopkins. Spirit serves 11 destinations from Cleveland and six from Akron-Canton.

For information on enrolling in TSA PreCheck: tsa.gov.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Federal Aid Approved For Georgia In Latest Storm

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

ALBANY, Ga. (AP) – Gov. Nathan Deal says the White House has approved federal aid for southwest Georgia residents recovering after deadly tornadoes and thunderstorms struck last weekend.

Deal said Thursday that President Donald Trump has granted assistance for six counties that suffered severe damage as waves of storms hammered the Southeast on Saturday and Sunday. Twenty people died in the region, including 15 in Georgia.

Deal said he expects the White House will later approve federal aid to 10 additional Georgia counties included in the governor's emergency declaration.

Trump's initial declaration Thursday frees up federal assistance to residents of Berrien, Cook, Crisp, Dougherty, Turner and Wilcox counties. On Wednesday, the White House also approved aid for prior storms that damaged southwest Georgia on Jan. 2.

10:20 a.m.

The National Weather Service says a powerful EF3 tornado packing peak winds of 140 mph was responsible for killing 11 people in southwest Georgia.

The agency reports a survey team confirmed a large twister carved a path of destruction Sunday nearly 25 miles long – and in places nearly a half-mile wide – through Brooks, Cook and Berrien counties. Seven people died at a mobile home park in Cook County when the twister hit before dawn. The other counties counted two deaths apiece.

The Weather Service has confirmed at least 24 tornadoes touched down in Georgia during the weekend storm outbreak. At least 20 people were killed in the Southeast – 15 in Georgia, four in Mississippi and one in Florida.

9:55 a.m.

President Donald Trump has declared a federal disaster in southwest Georgia for a severe storm that caused extensive damage nearly three weeks before another round of tornadoes and thunderstorms devastated the same area.

A statement the White House issued Wednesday says the declaration makes federal aid available for damage inflicted Jan. 2. Assistance for individuals is available for residents of Dougherty County, while aid for government and nonprofit response efforts has been approved for Baker, Calhoun, Early, Mitchell, Turner and Worth counties.

Gov. Nathan Deal said he expects more federal aid to follow after a second wave of severe weather caused even greater destruction last weekend, killing 20 people in the Southeast – 15 in Georgia, four in Mississippi and one in Florida.

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Feds Declare A Disaster For Deadly South Georgia Storms

By Greg Bluestein

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, January 26, 2017

The federal government approved another emergency request on Thursday for aid for residents in six counties struck by the wave of storms that left 15 people in Georgia dead.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said the assistance could include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help victims recover. FEMA has yet to decide on extending the aid to another 10 counties.

"Total devastation," a visibly shaken Deal said after touring a mobile home site in Adel where seven people died. "It's hard to imagine that anyone escaped from that."

More than 770 state employees are clearing debris and providing storm relief, and state lawmakers have set aside an additional $5 million to help with the recovery. But local leaders were hoping President Donald Trump's administration sends more help. Quickly.

"We're helping the victims meet their immediate needs," said Eric Gordon, a pastor at Adel First Assembly. "But we need help for the long-term needs. Where are they going to live long-term? Where are they going to sleep next week?"

The FEMA order means federal funding will also be available to some state and local government agencies as well as some private nonprofits for their emergency work.

It covers residents and businesses in six counties: Berrien, Cook, Crisp, Dougherty, Turner and Wilcox.

FEMA Grants Individual Assistance To Six South Georgia Counties

WXIA-TV Atlanta, January 26, 2017

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal received notice on Thursday from FEMA that six counties impacted by last weekend's severe storms and tornadoes have been approved for individual assistance.

The six counties approved are Berrien, Cook, Crisp, Dougherty, Turner and Wilcox counties.

"I'm tremendously grateful for the immediate assistance and attention President Trump has given Georgia's requests for federal aid, as well as his concern for our citizens," said Deal. "I'd also like to thank President Trump for sending the acting director of FEMA to view firsthand the horrific effects of this natural disaster. FEMA, along with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, is working to expedite financial assessments in the remaining counties impacted by the storms.

"Following my conversations with President Trump and FEMA, I'm confident that public assistance for all 16 counties will be approved expeditiously. This approval is critical to the state as well as local communities."

Deal has requested individual assistance from FEMA for the remaining ten counties presently under a state of emergency as a result of the storms that ravaged south Georgia over the weekend. 15 people were killed and more than 85 people were hurt in the storms that hammered the state Saturday and Sunday. The storms came only weeks after an earlier round of severe weather slammed parts of Dougherty County on New Year's weekend, causing additional damage.

(© 2017 WXIA)

Dougherty, Five Other Counties OK'd For Federal Assistance For Last Weekend's Storms

By Jim Hendricks

Albany (GA) Herald, January 26, 2017

ALBANY — Dougherty County and five other counties in South Georgia were approved Thursday for individual federal assistance for damages sustained by last weekend's tornadoes and storms that left 15 people dead, including four in Dougherty County.

Gov. Nathan Deal announced that the White House and the Federal Emergency Management Agency had approved the assistance for Dougherty, Berrien, Cook, Crisp, Turner and Wilcox counties.

"I'm tremendously grateful for the immediate assistance and attention President Trump has given Georgia's requests for federal aid, as well as his concern for our citizens," said Deal. "I'd also like to thank President Trump for sending the acting director of FEMA to view firsthand the horrific effects of this natural disaster.

"FEMA, along with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, is working to expedite financial assessments in the remaining counties impacted by the storms."

Acting FEMA Director Robert Fenton was in Albany on Thursday, viewing damage with Dougherty County Commission Chairman Chris Cohilas.

Deal declared a state of emergency earlier this week for a total of 16 counties and has asked for the federal designation for all of them. The remainder of that list includes Atkinson, Baker, Brooks, Calhoun, Clay, Colquitt, Lowndes, Mitchell, Thomas and Worth counties.

"Following my conversations with President Trump and FEMA, I'm confident that public assistance for all 16 counties will be approved expeditiously," the governor said. "This approval is critical to the state as well as local communities."

After an aerial tour of the Albany area on Wednesday, Deal announced on Twitter during a driving tour of Cook County that Dougherty County had been approved for individual assistance for damage that occurred during the first storm to strike the area on Jan. 2. The governor asked for the federal help for that event on Jan. 10.

The federal approval was much swifter on this latest request, which Deal made Tuesday.

U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop, D-Albany, who represents the 2nd Congressional District where much of the damage occurred, said he was pleased to see the second declaration in as many days.

"This second, expanded major disaster declaration will be essential to providing much-needed resources to those in Middle and Southwest Georgia that were impacted by the severe weather this month," Bishop said. "Georgians have always proven to be resilient, and this time will be no different.

"With FEMA's assistance, we will work together to restore a sense of normalcy to our communities."

Bishop said the designation provides federal resources for affected individuals and households, including financial assistance for temporary housing, home repair and damaged essential household items. It also covers disaster-related child care, medical and essential vehicle expenses.

According to the summary provided by the governor's office, the individual assistance designation means that help is available to individuals and households.

FEMA's website notes that assistance that can apply includes:

— Rental payments for temporary housing for those whose homes are unlivable. Initial assistance may be provided for up to three months for homeowners and at least one month for renters. Assistance may be extended if requested, based on a review of individual applicant requirements.

— Grants for home repairs and replacement of essential household items not covered by insurance to make damaged dwellings safe, sanitary and functional.

— Grants to replace personal property and help meet medical, dental, funeral, transportation and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance or other federal, state and charitable aid programs.

John Mills, external affairs representative for FEMA, said Thursday afternoon that it is important for those who have damages to register.

"If you live in one of the six counties and you have damage to your home (whether homeowner or renter), you should register with FEMA for assistance," he said. "Only one registration is needed per household."

The process takes 15-20 minutes and can be done online at disasterassistance.gov or by calling 1 (800) 621-3362 (FEMA), he said. The FEMA website is fema.gov.

The FEMA help is for costs that are not covered by insurance and those that are underinsured. Mills said the only way a person will know whether he or she qualifies for assistance is to sign up. He said it's also important for individuals to let agency officials know if the residence is uninhabitable during registration. The mission, he said, is to help get a storm victim's home "safe, sanitary and functional."

Mills said it is important that individuals document damage, when it occurred and to take photos of the damage if possible. "The more documentation you have, the better," he said, adding it helps not only FEMA, but insurance companies covering claims.

FEMA has other programs as well for public assistance, but they have not been activated.

"The real focus is getting help for individuals," Mills said. "Local governments can start the work they need to do."

Public assistance for emergency work and repair/replacement of disaster-damaged facilities is under review.

Counties also are eligible to apply for assistance under the Hazard Mitigation Grant program for assistance for actions taken to prevent or reduce long-term risk to life and property from natural disasters.

Governor: FEMA Assistance Approved For Weekend Storms

WFXL-TV Albany (GA), January 26, 2017

Six counties affected by the severe weather that came through Southwest Georgia over the weekend has now been approved to get additional assistance.

Georgia Governor Nathan Deal announced Thursday afternoon that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved six counties for additional assistance. They include:

Berrien
Cook
Crisp
Dougherty
Turner
Wilcox

"I'm tremendously grateful for the immediate assistance and attention President Trump has given Georgia's requests for federal aid, as well as his concern for our citizens," said Deal. "I'd also like to thank President [Donald] Trump for sending the acting director of FEMA to view firsthand the horrific effects of this natural disaster. FEMA, along with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, is working to expedite financial assessments in the remaining counties impacted by the storms.

"Following my conversations with President Trump and FEMA, I'm confident that public assistance for all 16 counties will be approved expeditiously. This approval is critical to the state as well as local communities," added Deal.

This approval comes about 24 hours after Governor Deal announced that FEMA assistance had been granted for dealing with severe weather that came through Southwest Georgia on January 2.

Rep. Scott Tours Damage In Several Counties

By Amanda Hoskins

CBP FOIA000454

WALB-TV Albany (GA), January 26, 2017

TURNER CO., GA (WALB) –

U.S. House Representative Austin Scott toured Worth, Turner and WIlcox County damage both in the air and on foot.

He saw utter destruction in the many places in Turner County where he grew up.

"It's hard to imagine the property damage without actually seeing it from above and of course it's not just turner county. It's all of the counties. In Worth County this morning I think there are still somewhere around 4,600 homes that are without power," said Scott.

He spoke with childhood friends that lost everything.

"You know these people are our friends, they're neighbors, they're family. This community is strong, and if you'll watch this community you will have neighbors helping neighbors and they will recover pretty fast," said Scott.

Following his tour of Worth and Turner Counties, Scott also walked the areas of Wilcox county that were destroyed.

Turner county will be one of six counties receiving FEMA assistance.

The federal declaration means individual homes will be given assistance from the government.

So homes completely destroyed will likely get help from the government.

FEMA officials were on the ground today talking with folks who have lost everything.

The tornado rolled right through this area with dozens of mobile homes.

In Turner County, alone 31 homes were completely destroyed,17 suffered major damage and another 16 suffered minor damage.

Federal assistance will also be given to the county for emergency work as well as replacing and repairing public facilities.

If you are a homeowner you can to go to disasterassistance.gov to report the damages on your home

This is the very beginning stages.

In the next week you can expect to see a disaster recovery center here in Turner County.

That will be the place where you can go, explain the extent of the damage you have and learn about the help you qualify for.

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US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

On His Final Day, Obama Made It Easier For Transgender Immigrants To Get Documents In Order

By Mathew Rodriguez

Mic, January 26, 2017

Former President Barack Obama spent the last few days of his presidency readying America for a Donald Trump administration. He designated new national parks to prevent drilling, commutated sentences for Chelsea Manning and Oscar López Rivera and, as it turns out, helped ensure transgender immigrants are able to get their legal documents in order.

The memo, available on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service's policy memoranda page, requires that USCIS change the gender marker on an official document if the person applying for the document presents:

• a court order granting change of sex or gender

• a government-issued document (amended birth certificate, driver's license, etc.) reflecting the requested gender designation

• a letter from a licensed health professional affirming the applicant's gender identity

The most substantive change to the policy is an expansion of the documents accepted to change the gender marker. Previously, applicants needed to supply an amended birth certificate, passport, court order or doctor's note. Accepted documents include the aforementioned, as well as driver's licenses and other federal, state and local official documents that reflects the person's gender identity. Additionally, applicants can now supply official documents from foreign governments.

According to Harper Jean Tobin, policy director at the National Center for Transgender Equality, these are "modest, fairly technical updates" to a policy that's already existed for five years at the federal level. Tobin also pointed out that some states — such as Massachusetts, Maine, Hawaii and Connecticut — have similar or even more progressive stances on changing gender markers.

Tobin said the most important part of this update is that immigrants can now much more easily have all of their USCIS-issued documents — like work permits, visas and green cards — reflect the same gender.

"We're talking about people who need to update these documents to reflect the way they live their lives every day," Tobin said. "If someone lives as a man and works as a male and his ID says he is female, it's embarrassing for him and potentially confusing for his employer or any other official he may come in contact with. Having policies like this that make the procedure better makes sense."

While this benefits documented immigrants, the memo does not help undocumented immigrants, who face an uncertain

future under a Trump administration. Trump has already made a slew of announcements about his plans for the American immigration system, including signing an executive order to build his infamous wall and proposing to

ban refugees from certain countries from entering the United States. Trump's policies will put barriers, both physical and bureaucratic, between the United States and those looking to immigrate here.

White House illuminated with rainbow colorsSource: Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP

While transgender rights and immigration have been huge issues during the 2016 election, rarely did the media cover them together. Trans immigrant rights last made national news in 2015 when activist and transgender woman Jennicet Gutierrez interrupted Obama during a White House LGBTQ reception to advocate for trans people being mistreated in immigrant detention centers.

The memo does leave open some leeway for USCIS to request more of transgender applicants, however. According to the memo, USCIS can request "additional evidence" of a person's gender identity. The memo also says that if an officer finds "significant substantive discrepancies" or suspects fraud, the case may have to go to a higher authority.

Obama has been an advocate for transgender people in more ways than one. Aside from this eleventh-hour policy memo, Obama's administration issued a historic directive on equal-rights statute Title IX that allowed for transgender students to use public school facilities that matches their gender identity.

IMMIGRATION

Trump's Plan To Halt 'Catch And Release' Of Migrants Could Hit A Wall

By Frank Jack Daniel

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump Wants To Empower Local Police To Enforce Immigration Law, Raising Fears Of Racial Profiling

By Matt Zapotosky

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

President Trump on Wednesday directed his homeland security secretary to deputize local law enforcement officials to enforce immigration laws, a move that civil rights advocates fear could embolden police to racially profile those they encounter.

The directive came as part of a sweeping executive order that cracks down on people in the country without documentation and the cities that don't readily hand them over for deportation.

The order instructs the homeland security secretary to broker agreements with governors and local officials so that state and local law enforcement authorities can enforce immigration law. It declares that those places deemed "sanctuary jurisdictions," for blocking government communication about people's immigration status, be disallowed from receiving federal grants. And it reinstates a program meant to deport those in the country illegally when they are arrested on other, sometimes minor, offenses.

The directives send "a shot across the bow of immigrant communities and those localities or states that are welcoming of immigrant communities," said Cecillia Wang, deputy legal director at the American Civil Liberties Union.

"Certainly, I think the immediate purpose is to scare immigrant communities and to scare states and localities that have these so-called sanctuary policies, but I do think there's meat to this," Wang said. "It's not an empty letter, and it's not an empty threat."

Trump had promised on the campaign trail to crack down on illegal immigration, and his early actions make good on that vow. He also signed an order Wednesday attempting to spur construction of a proposed border wall between the United States and Mexico.

The Immigration and Nationality Act already allowed the federal government to deputize local officials to enforce immigration law through what are commonly referred to as 287(g) agreements. At one time, Wang said, dozens of jurisdictions had such arrangements with the federal government, though former president Barack Obama curtailed many of them.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement still has 36 agreements in 16 states, but they are all in jails, not with local or state police agencies, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokeswoman said. Jessica M. Vaughan, the director of policy studies and the Center for Immigration Studies, which advocates reduced immigration levels, said in 2008 there were more than 60 agreements, including three dozen involving work outside of jails. She said the agreements were a "great program" that at one point were responsible for nearly 20 percent of Immigration and Customs Enforcement criminal deportations.

Wang said the agreements gave local police basis to essentially racially profile those they encountered. A Department of Homeland Security Inspector General investigation in 2010 found that "Claims of civil rights violations have surfaced in connection with several [law enforcement agencies] participating in the program," and advised Immigration and Customs Enforcement to consider civil rights factors when reaching agreements. Former Maricopa County, Ariz., sheriff Joe Arpaio, who now is facing a criminal contempt of court charge for allegedly defying court orders to stop detaining suspected undocumented immigrants without a legal basis, had used the program.

Trump's order, Wang said, would "unleash police agencies that want to get into the deportation business."

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Trump also on Wednesday ordered the return of the Secure Communities program, another controversial immigration enforcement mechanism that the Obama administration had dialed back. The program, which was administered from 2008 to 2014, checked the fingerprints of everyone taken into custody in the United States against immigration records, and immigration officials would then move for them to be detained and possibly deported.

Jeh Johnson, Obama's homeland security secretary, had watered the program down slightly, issuing a directive instructing officials to prioritize initiating deportation proceedings against those who posed a danger to public safety. Wang said the effect of that was limited, but Trump's undoing of it was troubling, and his order also seemed to increase the discretion of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, ordering them to prioritize cases against even those who had not been charged with any crimes but had "committed acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense."

"It's basically just broadening again the untrammeled discretion of ICE agents to determine who they want to pursue for deportation purposes," Wang said.

Trump also gave his homeland security secretary power to designate sanctuary jurisdictions, and he decreed that such jurisdictions should not receive federal grant money. D.C. officials warned that the nation's capital could lose millions — or even billions — in funding over the order, though it remains to be seen if and under what circumstances federal officials will actually act on it.

There is no uniform definition of a sanctuary city. Some places refuse detainer requests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement; others provide identification cards and driver's license to undocumented immigrants. Trump's order seemed to define such jurisdictions only as those that violate a federal law saying officials may not restrict government entities from sending or receiving information regarding a person's immigration status.

The Anti-immigrant President

By Maria Cardona

The Hill, January 26, 2017

Under the guise of national security, Donald Trump has announced a series of executive actions that start the process of building the wall between the U.S. and Mexico, strip protections from non-criminal immigrants and families fleeing other countries, and getting rid of Sanctuary cities.

Word is he will also announce the beginning of the ban on refugees and immigrants of several Muslim-majority countries and the repeal of DACA — deportation protection for Dreamers — in the coming days.

While this will thrill Trump supporters, this is in fact the next part of his continued attack on the immigrant, Latino, and Muslim communities. Trump might as well proclaim the first month of his administration National Anti-Immigrant Month.

Sounds harsh. But while these proclamations are no doubt welcome actions to the nearly half of his supporters who wanted Trump to crackdown on "illegal" immigrants, they have already carried a huge cost to the legal-immigrant community throughout the country, which has suffered both verbal and physical anti-immigrant backlash for the past 18 months.

In an executive order, a president gives instructions to government agencies and departments about how to operate and what policies to pursue. These executive orders he is signing now set the groundwork for real work to begin and allow Trump to claim victory and credit early on in his presidency.

Big day planned on NATIONAL SECURITY tomorrow. Among many other things, we will build the wall!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) January 25, 2017

So what exactly did he sign?

Through his executive orders thus far, he has apparently paved the way for the border wall at our southern border to be built. But many parts of the border already have sturdy fencing with virtual Border Patrol agent back-up using state-of-the-art technology.

So does it mean Trump wants to erect a wall in the rugged desert or mountainous regions? Will he claim Eminent Domain in the places where the border happens to be on private property? Will he trounce Tribal Law and build a wall on tribal lands not under U.S. government jurisdiction?

Do his supporters even care that more efficient ways of securing the border would have come to fruition if Comprehensive Immigration Reform had been passed by the GOP lead Congress?

I suspect not. Many of them simply are anti-immigrant and loved Trump's tough talk. Plain and simple. And sad.

Trump also signed an executive order that would crack down on so-called sanctuary cities, though no legal term of the kind actually exists, but "cracking down" on them sure sounds great to his supporters!

In reality, the threat to withhold funds to these cities if they don't turn over undocumented immigrants might be an empty one. Many mayors have vowed to protect these immigrants who would be in jeopardy of deportation even though they have no criminal record and have been productive members of their community.

Trump signs orders stripping "sanctuary cities" of federal funds if they ignore immigration laws https://t.co/4hW7OPaKDI pic.twitter.com/J2EZv55Ynp— The Hill (@thehill) January 26, 2017

Good for these mayors! If Trump withholds funds, it would be detrimental to local law enforcement — which would be anathema to the very supporters Trump is trying to kowtow to with this order.

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He also signed an executive order that would make it easier to deport families who turn themselves in at the border seeking asylum and also broadens the authority of local law enforcement to enforce immigration law.

This means that mothers, fathers, grandparents, who have done nothing but work hard and raise families, seeking a better future for their children, if detained on their way to or from their job, may be deported without delay.

We are similarly hearing word that another executive order is on the way that would in effect mean the repeal of DACA – Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – made real by President Obama's executive order in 2012. If DACA is repealed and nothing is put in its place legislatively, these 1.5 million kids will live in constant fear and anxiety.

And what about Trump's executive order banning refugees from Syria or a handful of other allegedly terrorist-supporting countries? This is nothing less than the beginning of Trump's Muslim Ban.

I can already hear anti-immigrant Trump supporters spewing hate, saying if you are "illegal" you have no right to be here in the first place. And that if you come from a country that breeds "terrorists" you should not be allowed in.

This misses the mark of the reality the country faces. We have close to 11 million undocumented immigrants. The vast majority — aside from not having documents that allow them to stay — are law-abiding, hard-working men and women who only want a brighter future for their children and families.

Many immigrants do the jobs Americans do not want — they clean our homes, our hotel rooms, grow, harvest, pick, prepare and serve our vegetables, and then they clean the plates afterwards.

Their children are valedictorians, top athletes, talented writers, artists, budding engineers, many are college educated or want to be, and many serve in our armed forces.

They are as American as President Trump is, except for a piece of paper.

The solution has been in front of the U.S. Congress for years — comprehensive immigration reform. If passed tomorrow, it would inject $1.5 trillion in the U.S. economy in the next 10 years, according to a 2010 report from the American Immigration Council. Undocumented workers would come out of the shadows, giving us a real idea of who is here.

With comprehensive reform, we would have much stronger and tougher border security measures that are real and effective instead of expensive and symbolic like Trump's ridiculous wall.

When it comes to refugees, we already have an "extreme vetting" process in place that takes two years to get through for refugees fleeing war torn countries.

Trump wants to end our America as we know it — a welcoming, shining city on a hill that immigrants see as an example to the world where human dignity, freedom and liberty are personified every day.

Well, not this day. For now, the message from the United States of Trump to the world is: Screw you immigrant, stay out.

Maria Cardona is a principal at the Dewey Square Group, a Democratic strategist and a CNN/CNN Español political commentator. Follow her on Twitter @MariaTCardona.

The views of contributors are their own and are not the views of The Hill.

Sanctuary Cities' Reactions To President Trump's Executive Order

By Eric Ting

San Francisco Chronicle, January 26, 2017

President Donald Trump told the Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday, Jan. 25, that he was moving forward with cutting off millions in federal funding to sanctuary cities.

The president signed an executive order that states that the U.S Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security shall "ensure that jurisdictions that willfully refuse to comply with 8 U.S.C. 1373 (sanctuary jurisdictions) are not eligible to receive Federal grants, except as deemed necessary for law enforcement purposes by the Attorney General or the Secretary."

A sanctuary city is a city that does not follow federal immigration laws, and one of Trump's major campaign promises was to "end sanctuary cities."

Several mayors of sanctuary cities have commented on the president's executive order, some saying they are willing to sacrifice federal funding to keep their sanctuary status.

Some cities argued Trump's action is unconstitutional and threatened legal action. In San Francisco, Mayor Ed Lee insisted the city would not let immigrant residents "live in fear."

Seattle Mayor Ed Murray said the Pacific Northwest city would "not be bullied by this administration."

Trump Issues Immigration Orders, But California Cities And Police Aren't Onboard

By Cindy Chang, Paloma Esquivel, Maya Lau, Contact Reporters

Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump's plan to enlist local police and sheriff's departments in immigration enforcement has set the stage for a pitched battle with California officials who have long prioritized building ties with immigrant communities.

Trump's plan, which was issued Wednesday as part of a pair of executive orders, seeks to broaden the reach of federal immigration authorities into county jails.

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It also calls for empowering police officers and deputies to act as immigration enforcers, leaving open the possibility that they would be required to inquire about the immigration status of the people they encounter on the streets.

Such a regime could conflict with the Los Angeles Police Department's decades-old policy that prohibits officers from initiating contact with a person solely to ask about whether he or she is in the country legally.

Local governments that defy the Trump administration's immigration policies by acting as "sanctuary cities" could be denied federal funding, one of the executive orders states.

More than 400 jurisdictions across the country, including Los Angeles, San Francisco and about 40 others in California, have such policies protecting immigrants.

California state officials have signaled that they will put up a fight. The California Legislature has selected former U.S. Atty. Gen. Eric H. Holder Jr. to serve as outside counsel on the state's legal strategy for dealing with the incoming administration.

The state's new attorney general, former congressman Xavier Becerra, said at his swearing-in on Tuesday that he will form a united front with officials from other states to defend their policies against any federal challenges.

Hours after Trump signed the executive orders, Los Angeles leaders suggested they would mount a legal challenge if funding is taken away.

Mayor Eric Garcetti told reporters Wednesday that he doesn't believe the federal government can cut off funding to Los Angeles, citing the 10th Amendment, which addresses the powers of state and federal governments.

"We feel very strong the legal case is clear," Garcetti said.

The particulars of Trump's orders are still being dissected by Los Angeles leaders. But City Council President Herb Wesson told reporters that "the city is going to continue to operate the way it operates."

Los Angeles will receive about $500 million this fiscal year from the federal government to pay for an array of services, including port security, anti-gang programs and services for senior citizens.

That doesn't include federal funding that flows to entities such as the Los Angeles Unified School District or Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority.

"It would be folly for any administration to take away funds to protect America's port," Garcetti said. "Or take away vouchers that help get veterans who have fought for our country off the street."

Shortly after Trump's election, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck announced that he would not work with federal authorities on deportation efforts.

"We have built relationships by effective law enforcement that doesn't focus on where a person was born or the color of their skin. And we don't intend to change that," Beck said Wednesday.

Trump's plan for local jails involves reinstating a program called Secure Communities, which asks jail officials to hand inmates over to federal immigration authorities up to 48 hours past when the inmate would otherwise have been released. Federal authorities can ask for inmates who have committed only immigration violations, in addition to those with serious criminal records.

In 2013, California passed the Trust Act, which limited jail officials' ability to cooperate with federal immigration requests to only those inmates who have been convicted of "serious" or "violent" crimes.

In 2014, after a federal court held an Oregon county liable for damages for holding an inmate beyond her release date at the request of immigration authorities, hundreds of cities and counties around the country stopped complying with many immigration hold requests.

Later that year, then-President Obama ended the Secure Communities program, creating a new jail program that focused only on inmates convicted of "significant" criminal offenses or who posed a danger to public safety.

The return of Secure Communities could mean that California sheriffs would have to choose between state law and federal law.

Los Angeles and Orange County sheriff's officials said Wednesday that the president's executive order likely won't have any immediate impact on how they do business.

Federal immigration agents are inside the Los Angeles County jails "almost on a daily basis," said Assistant Sheriff Kelly Harrington, head of the Sheriff's Department's custody division, speaking to the county Board of Supervisors earlier this month.

If the agents want access to an inmate, sheriff's officials vet the name to ensure that the person has been charged or convicted of a serious or violent crime, in accordance with the Trust Act, Harrington said.

Sheriff Jim McDonnell said in a statement Wednesday that Trump's order would not "change the mission" of his department, which he said would continue to follow the Trust Act and other state immigration law.

"Our department policy clearly states that our deputies do not ask for one's immigration status," he said. "Immigration enforcement remains a federal responsibility."

At the Orange County Sheriff's Department, officials are conferring with attorneys to figure out the new landscape.

"What the future looks like a few weeks out, we will talk to county counsel about. But today, nothing is changing," said Lt. Mark Stichter, public information officer for the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

Neither the Los Angeles nor Orange County sheriff's departments permit their deputies to initiate contact with anyone solely on the basis of a suspected immigration

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violation. Deputies cannot question a suspect about immigration status even if the person was stopped for another reason, officials from both agencies said.

"We do not conduct or participate in any immigration enforcement," Stichter said.

Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood, a critic of the Trust Act who once vowed to defy the law, said in an interview Wednesday that he was still reviewing the administration's orders and that it would take some time to sort out the implications. But he is concerned about a possible clash between the state and federal governments over immigration enforcement.

When state and federal laws aren't in sync, he said, law enforcement is "in the crosshairs."

"We're trying to avoid being in the middle," he said.

Youngblood, who worked around limits on immigration holds by letting federal immigration agents into his jails and giving them access to arrest records, said his deputies are not immigration agents and "are not in the business of immigration." They do not ask about immigration status after an arrest.

Hiroshi Motomura, an expert in immigration law at UCLA, said that despite the tough rhetoric in Wednesday's White House announcement, there are constitutional and other legal limits on how much the federal government can punish states and cities that don't go along with its priorities.

"The federal government can't take over state and local governments," Motomura said. "You have a lot of federal vehicles to facilitate cooperation by state and local governments. But there are limits on the federal government's ability to force cooperation."

Chris Newman, an attorney for the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, was involved in legal challenges to oppose Secure Communities under the Obama administration.

He said the policies announced by Trump sounded "eerily similar" to those enacted in the first years of Obama's presidency. Those policies, he said, led to a backlash in many communities in California, which eventually adopted the Trust Act.

Newman predicts a similar backlash in response to Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration.

"The idea of a return to Secure Communities combined with Trump's racist rhetoric will likely inspire more sanctuary policies," he said.

San Francisco Mayor Reiterates Sanctuary Status In Speech

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) – San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee reiterated the city's "sanctuary" status in his annual state of the city speech, a day after President Donald Trump threatened to withhold money from jurisdictions that do not cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

Lee said Thursday that the city is a sanctuary now and forever. He said San Francisco will continue to protect people who are living in the country illegally.

San Francisco receives about $1 billion a year from the federal government. Lee said at a previous press conference that Trump's threat to withhold money lacked specifics so officials are unclear on what might be at stake for the city's budget.

The mayor also highlighted successes as well as challenges to come in the areas of housing, policing and homelessness.

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California Attorney General Vows To 'Defend' State's Residents Against Trump Policies : NPR

NPR, January 26, 2017

Steve Inskeep talks with California's new Democratic Attorney General Xavier Becerra, who says he plans to defend the state's liberal immigration and environmental policies against the Trump administration.

STEVE INSKEEP, HOST:

That wall that President Trump wants on the U.S.-Mexico border is meant as just a start. The president, yesterday, ordered a series of acts on immigration.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED RECORDING)

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: Ends the policy of catch and release at the border, requires other countries to take back their criminals – they will take them back – cracks down on sanctuary cities.

INSKEEP: Let's talk about that last item – so-called sanctuary cities. Now, there is no place in the United States where a fugitive immigrant is entirely safe from arrest. Federal agents can go where they want. But there are cities and counties which have explicitly said it's not their job to actively help with round-ups.

The president's order threatens those cities with a loss of federal funds. It is not clear that he can legally follow through with that, but many cities and states are responding strongly. We reached California's new Democratic Attorney General Xavier Becerra from a state with many sanctuary cities.

XAVIER BECERRA: We're going to do everything we can to protect the citizens and residents of the state of California. We're going to do everything we can to let people who come to our state to build it know that we want to respect them and defend them. And we're going to do everything we

can to make sure we abide by all the laws, starting with the U.S. Constitution.

INSKEEP: What are some things that localities in California refuse to do when it comes to immigration law?

BECERRA: Principally, what it is – is that most of the local jurisdictions and law enforcement refuse to do is to violate the U.S. Constitution by holding people that they no longer have a basis to detain simply because the federal immigration authorities say please hold on to those folks. You cannot detain people, under the Fourth Amendment, without justification to do so.

INSKEEP: Attorney General Becerra, the way that you describe a sanctuary city makes this seem like a rather narrow issue. The term sanctuary city sounds far more dramatic than the acts you're describing.

BECERRA: And that's, Steve, the issue is that some people have tried to turn the word sanctuary into something that it's not. Sanctuary doesn't mean that you're protecting violent, dangerous criminals from the hands of law enforcement, whether federal or local. It simply means that we are not going to go out there and engage in activities that go beyond what the U.S. Constitution says we should do with people who are law-abiding, working hard, improving the neighborhoods and communities where they live.

We also don't want to have people who fear talking to police officers simply because the federal immigration authorities would like our local law enforcement authorities to be aggressive beyond what legally they're supposed to do.

INSKEEP: What is the state of California going to do if cities start losing federal funding over this?

BECERRA: That's a question that has to yet be answered in a way that gives us a chance to look at the facts because the state of California, when it receives federal resources, it does so because it's sent over taxpayer dollars from the people of California. So we will do everything we can to defend our local California taxpayers from being denied the resources that they paid for.

If the federal government has a reason to block funding or deny resources to the state of California, we will certainly look at that and challenge it if it doesn't seem right. But we don't believe that we should be losing money for police officers and community policing simply because we're abiding by the U.S. Constitution when it comes to the treatment of immigrants.

INSKEEP: I think you're hinting around at a fact that California is one of the states that, when people calculate these things, tends to pay more in taxes than it receives back. Is that right – federal taxes?

BECERRA: Without a doubt. California is a donor state to the federal Treasury. We always, as taxpayers in the state of California, pay more in taxes than we get back to our state. And so we're going to fight where we need to to make sure that we get the resources that we provided to the federal Treasury. And we'll make sure that we're abiding by every law that we must, starting with the U.S. Constitution.

INSKEEP: Let me ask about another thing, attorney general. California, as some people will know, has stricter auto emission standards than the country as a whole. You had to get, as a state, a waiver from the federal government to impose those standards. President Obama granted the waiver. Now there's a new administration, and the incoming EPA administrator, the nominee, hasn't said definitively whether he would allow that waiver or not. Is that something you would be prepared to go to court to uphold – stricter emission standards for California?

BECERRA: Steve, we're not turning back when it comes to climate change and clean energy. We received a waiver from the federal government. We will do everything we can to defend our position, and we will do more if necessary. We've relied on the representations and the tools that the federal government permitted us to use. And if the federal government wants to, all of a sudden, yank those away, we will do everything we can to prove that, based on the facts and the law, that California has a right to move forward.

INSKEEP: And when you say based on the facts and the law that means that could be another lawsuit if it came to that.

BECERRA: We're going to do what we need to to move forward. We will continue with our policies. We'll continue with our actions that have made California a state where people want to live and work. We'll do whatever we need to do to continue our way of life and our way forward.

INSKEEP: One other thing, attorney general. Of course, there's been a lot of debates about state rights throughout American history. There was a time when more conservative states were asserting state rights against a powerful federal government. Do you find yourself becoming an advocate of state rights?

BECERRA: Steve, what's really interesting in that comparison of the use of states' rights is that in previous generations, some states asserted their rights under the 10th Amendment to challenge other constitutional provisions that protected the rights of individuals.

INSKEEP: Civil rights legislation, for example, right. OK.

BECERRA: Right, or just the 14th Amendment – equal protection under the law. And using the 10th Amendment to try to undermine the 14th Amendment, to me, was not what the founders of this nation meant when they enacted the 10th Amendment.

INSKEEP: We should remind people, the 10th Amendment, if I'm not mistaken, says that all powers that are not explicitly granted to the federal government are reserved to the states. Is that right?

BECERRA: That's correct. When we talk about the rights of states to move forward, whether it's on clean energy

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or our treatment of immigrants, it's to respect the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, not undermine the Bill of Rights.

INSKEEP: California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, thanks very much.

BECERRA: Steve, thank you.

De Blasio Says Trump Targeting 'Sanctuary Cities' Like NYC Is A Threat To Safety

By Erin Durkin, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, January 26, 2017

President Trump's executive order targeting jurisdictions that harbor undocumented immigrants is "going to make cities less safe," Mayor de Blasio said Thursday.

Appearing on CNN Thursday morning, de Blasio said the order to strip federal grants from "sanctuary cities" threatened to upend years of progress police departments have made cultivating trust in immigrant neighborhoods.

"This is the kind of thing that will destroy that promise, and make it impossible for the police to keep cities safe," he said. "New York City has half a million undocumented people. We want them to come forward and work with the police if they see a crime, if they're a victim of a crime. If they believe by talking to a police officer they will get deported and be torn apart from their family, they're not going to work with police."

NYPD officers, and other city employees, generally do not inquire about the immigration status of people they come into contact with on the job — and do not disclose it to federal authorities if they learn it.

President Trump signed an executive order Wednesday that would withhold funds from "sanctuary cities" like New York City. (Olivier Douliery / POOL/EPA)

For the large majority of crimes, city jails refuse to hand over people who have been arrested when requested by the feds for deportation proceedings. But there are 170 serious crimes that would trigger the city to cooperate.

"If someone's truly a violent criminal, absolutely, they should be deported," de Blasio said.

New York does not plan to alter its policies in response to the executive order, and the mayor reiterated that the city will sue if funding is stripped because of it. The order does not spell out exactly what money will be withdrawn — the city gets $7 billion a year in federal funding, most of which would not be affected by the order — but officials believe about $160 million in anti-terror and Justice Department grants could be at risk.

Mayor de Blasio thinks these new orders will make work harder for the NYPD and other city police departments. (tillsonburg/tillsonburg)

"Police chiefs all over the country are saying, 'Don't do that, don't do that, it's actually going to hurt us,'" de Blasio said. "The money he will take away will actually be from police departments trying to stop terror and trying to stop crime."

The mayor also weighed in on Trump's vague threat to "send in the feds" to Chicago if the "carnage" of high murder rates there doesn't stop, saying he should give the city money to hire more police.

"Provide Mayor [Rahm] Emanuel with the support to add police officers and implement neighborhood policing. Don't go back to a broken policy of stop and frisk," de Blasio said.

De Blasio Threatens Lawsuit Over Trump's Move On Sanctuary Cities

By Rebecca Savransky

The Hill, January 26, 2017

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) is threatening to sue the Trump administration in response to an executive order signed Wednesday to strip federal grants from "sanctuary cities," Politico reported.

"President Trump issued an executive order today and it's purported purpose was to enhance public safety, but here in New York City and in cities across this nation this executive order could in fact undermine public safety," de Blasio said during a press conference at City Hall.

De Blasio said the "potential funding cuts suggested in the executive order would first and foremost fall on the NYPD."

There are "hundreds of American cities where this executive order could undermine public safety," he added.

De Blasio also said the city would not "deport law abiding New Yorkers."

He noted the executive order was "written in a very vague fashion" and therefore is "susceptible to legal challenges."

"The minute any specific action to withhold funding were to occur, that's when Zach Carter is in court the next hour," de Blasio said, referring to the city's corporation counsel.

President Trump on Wednesday signed an executive order that would strip federal grants from cities and states that do not enforce federal immigration laws.

De Blasio said Thursday on CNN that the New York Police Department has spent "decades building relationships with communities, including immigrant communities."

"This is the kind of thing that would destroy that progress and make it impossible for the police to keep cities safe," de Blasio told "New Day."

He said New York City has half a million undocumented people and the city wants them to come forward and talk to police if they witness or are a victim of a crime.

"If they believe by talking to a police officer, they will get deported and be torn apart from their family, they're not going to work with police," he said.

NYC Rejected Nearly All Federal Requests To Hold Illegal Immigrants

New York Post, January 26, 2017

A state lawmaker got into a battle with city officials Thursday over how many undocumented immigrants charged or convicted of crimes were turned over to federal authorities last year.

Assembly member Nicole Malliotakis (R-SI) said NYPD stats show the city cooperated with only two of 80 "detainer" requests from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement between Oct. 1, 2015, and Sept. 30, 2016.

The requests sought people suspected of immigration violations who were charged with, or convicted of, unrelated crimes by local law enforcement agencies.

The issue garnered national attention after President Trump signed an executive order Wednesday that put "sanctuary cities" like New York on notice they could lose federal funds if they don't cooperate on immigration enforcement.

"It's truly frightening that our city refuses to treat criminals in accordance with federal law, and would jeopardize federal funding by harboring individuals who have committed crimes from deportation," said Malliotakis.

"It is time to restore New York City to a law-and-order city."

But city officials countered that they haven't yet acted in 46 of the 80 cases because those individuals are still serving time for crimes.

They said a number of the other individuals sought by ICE weren't convicted of a crime or were misdemeanor cases.

ICE officials couldn't immediately provide a breakdown of the charges or convictions against the 80 people for whom they filed detainers.

In late 2014, de Blasio signed into law a City Council bill that severely reduced the city's cooperation with federal detainer requests — limiting them to cases of felony convictions within the prior five years where the feds have a judicial warrant.

The city also continued to cooperate on cases of possible matches with terrorist watchlists.

In the year before the law was passed — between Oct. 1, 2013, and Sept. 30, 2014 — the city transferred 2,016 detainees to federal custody while not honoring 1,159 requests, according to Department of Correction data.

The mayor has defended the refusal to cooperate in cases involving minor crimes by highlighting a list of 170 felonies where the city does transfer detainees to the feds.

The list of crimes includes felony assault, rape, murder, gun smuggling, witness tampering and patronizing a prostitute.

"If you have done nothing, broken no law, or you've broken a minor law — you went through a stop sign or you had a small amount of marijuana or something like that — we don't cooperate," de Blasio told HOT 97 radio Thursday. "We don't cooperate on minor things."

Malliotakis said the city's list leaves out convictions for other serious crimes, including grand larceny and identity theft.

City officials estimate New York risks losing more than $150 million — all of it at the NYPD's expense — if the Trump administration withholds funding under a narrow interpretation of the executive order.

Meanwhile, the White House said it plans to publish a weekly list of crimes committed by undocumented immigrants in the Big Apple and roughly 300 other sanctuary cities.

The list is meant to inform people about "public safety threats associated with sanctuary" cities, the executive order Trump signed Wednesday says.

"The [Homeland Security] Secretary shall . . . make public a comprehensive list of criminal actions committed by aliens and any jurisdiction that ignored or otherwise failed to honor any detainers with respect to such aliens," the order says.

Long Island Groups: Trump Immigration Orders Foster Fear

By Víctor Manuel Ramos

Newsday (NY), January 26, 2017

Advocates representing immigrants, women's groups and minority communities joined members of a Bay Shore mosque Thursday to condemn immigration enforcement orders from President Donald Trump that they said will harm the most vulnerable.

"An attack on any of us is an attack on all of us," said Alejandra Sorto, an organizer with the Long Island Civic Engagement Table, a Brentwood-based coalition that organized the news conference.

The orders, signed and unveiled Wednesday by the administration, authorize spending and actions to erect a wall along the southern border with Mexico while increasing the hiring of immigration enforcement agents, expanding detention of unauthorized immigrants and stepping up efforts to apprehend and remove immigrants with criminal records and those here illegally.

A ban on visas from specific Muslim-majority countries also is expected, as promised by Trump during the presidential campaign.

Those policies, consistent with Trump's vows to curtail illegal entry and roll back other immigration policies, have

stirred up concern in immigrant communities, where many are feeling targeted not only by the expected enforcement but by the climate of mistrust and fear they say it fosters.

The nearly 40 people at the Bay Shore gathering said the orders and statements from Trump will be countered by their campaign for unity, with Latinos, Muslims, Jewish, LGBTQ and women's reproductive rights advocates joining so far what they're calling the Long Island Unity Collaborative.

Trump's emphasis on pursuing enforcement and limiting the influx of people from Muslim-majority countries labeled as terror threats betray the values of this nation, those advocates said.

Muhammad Abdul Jabbar, imam of the Majid Darul Qur'an mosque in Bay Shore, also known as The Muslim Center of Long Island, said the Trump administration's actions send a negative message.

"The negative perceptions and associations created by these executive orders will very likely cause a further increase in hate crimes, discrimination and bigotry against ordinary, law-abiding American Muslims, the Latinos and other minorities," Jabbar said.

Other advocates said they would continue to protest, march, try to engage voters in minority communities and lobby local and state officials to create a firewall against the federal enforcement push.

However, proponents of increased enforcement against illegal immigration don't see any problem with Trump's orders so far.

"It's not un-American for Trump to do what he's doing," said Barrett Psareas, vice president of the Nassau County Civic Association, a residents' group that opposes high taxation and illegal immigration. "He's enforcing what Congress has already authorized" in building the wall and acting on immigration laws.

"What he's doing with the deportations now is if you've committed a crime, you're out. Are families going to be split up? Yeah, but it was not anybody's fault here that people decided to come illegally," Psareas added.

Immigrants' advocates contend the matter is not as simple as just deporting criminals, because the definition of who is deemed a criminal under Trump's orders is a matter of debate, and even those charged with crimes should be given due process before they're ousted, said Irma Solis, director of the Suffolk County Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union.

Maryann Slutsky, executive director of immigrant-advocacy group Long Island Wins, said the aggressive enforcement should concern all Americans.

The executive orders "were created with a complete and total lack of compassion," Slutsky said. "These executive orders are not based on national security. They are based on Islamophobia and xenophobia. . . . We are one America. We are one Long Island and we can do better than this."

Immigrant Groups Want Welcoming City Ordinance Strengthened

By Fran Spielman

Chicago Sun-Times, January 26, 2017

Chanting "undocumented, unafraid," immigration activists demanded Thursday that Mayor Rahm Emanuel strengthen Chicago's Welcoming City Ordinance by removing all of the exceptions.

Currently, Chicago Police officers are permitted to cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement if targeted individuals are: in the city's gang database; have pending felony prosecutions or prior felony convictions or if they are the subject of an outstanding criminal warrant.

At a City Hall news conference, immigrant activists joined forces with the Black Youth Project to demand that Emanuel eliminate all of those exceptions.

"The carve-outs … make it so that there [are] immigrants who can be targeted for deportation. Someone who is in the gang database, for example, because a police officer decided that they look like someone who's in a gang can be targeted for deportation without them having any chance to defend themselves," said Tania Unzueta, legal and policy director for Mijente, a national Latino organization.

"What we want is a city where everyone is protected, regardless of whether they've had negative interactions with police. Regardless of whether they have been targeted or criminalized by police," she said. "With those carve-outs in place, immigrants don't feel safe in Chicago."

Unzueta was particularly incensed by the exception made for "pending felony prosecutions."

"We have a court system in the United States that says people are innocent until proven guilty. It is a complete violation of due process for someone to be considered a dangerous person when they actually haven't gone through the court system," she said.

Earlier this week, President Donald Trump signed a series of executive orders to begin to deliver on his campaign promises on the volatile issue of immigration.

The orders authorized construction of the wall Trump promised to build along the Mexican border and empowered his Departments of Justice and Homeland Security to follow through on his threat to cut off funding to sanctuary cities where immigrants can access city services and live without fear of police harassment.

Emanuel responded to the renewed threat by declaring that Chicago will remain a sanctuary city.

The mayor's promise — and the $1.3 million Legal Protection Fund he has created to support immigrants threatened with deportation under Trump — were not enough to satisfy Janae Bonsu, national police chair for the Black Youth Project.

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"While Rahm Emanuel has pledged that Chicago will remain a sanctuary city, the bar for what `sanctuary' means has been set way too low," Bonsu said.

"It's not enough to not cooperate with immigration agents for only some undocumented immigrants. It's not enough for the city to rely on this 'good immigrant, bad immigrant' dichotomy that uses alleged criminal or gang involvement as a marker of exclusion…The Welcoming City ordinance leaves way too many loopholes and leaves the door wide open for the deportation machine to continue and for mass incarceration and criminalization to remain unchecked."

No aldermen attended Thursday's news conference because none were invited.

But Ald. Ricardo Munoz (22nd) joined rookie Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (35th) in supporting the drive to eliminate all of the exceptions.

"The Welcoming City ordinance is a good first step. But we need to make sure that it includes all immigrants, [including] people who made mistakes in the past," Munoz said.

"We want to be fair to all of the families. You've got families who have a U.S. citizen, a legal permanent resident and an undocumented all in one household. And if that one undocumented made a mistake — probably got a couple of excessive tickets or maybe even made a mistake that ended up in a lock-up — they should still be able to afford themselves to their rights in this country."

Chicago's days as a "sanctuary city," where undocumented people can access city services and live without fear of police harassment, date back more than 30 years.

In 1985, then-Mayor Harold Washington issued an executive order prohibiting city employees from enforcing federal immigration laws. He made the move to protest the federal government's decision to question people seeking city services and conduct random searches of city records in an effort to find undocumented immigrants.

Four years later, then-Mayor Richard M. Daley affirmed the executive order. In 2006, the City Council turned the order into law as the immigration debate raged on in Congress.

It prohibited city agencies from asking about the immigration status of people seeking city services. The ordinance also prohibited Chicago Police from questioning the immigration status of crime victims, witnesses or other law-abiding citizens.

Despite that city policy, there remained a legal loophole.

When Chicago Police made a stop, ran a criminal background check and found a deportation order, there was no specific standard on what they should do amid mounting pressure from the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to turn them over.

As a result, a 54-year-old mother from Cameroon stopped after failing to signal a turn was detained for two nights in 2012 after police found a deportation order on her record.

The case of Rose Tchakounte — who was turned over to ICE, but never deported — became a cause célèbre for the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

In response, Emanuel and U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.), united behind a so-called "Welcoming City" ordinance that prohibits police from detaining undocumented immigrants unless they are wanted on a criminal warrant or have been convicted of a serious crime.

From a political standpoint, the 2012 news conference was an opportunity for Emanuel to make amends with Gutierrez.

During Emanuel's days as Barack Obama's chief of staff, Gutierrez accused Emanuel of standing in the way of immigration reform and being singularly responsible for Obama's failure to deliver on his campaign promise to Hispanics.

Gutierrez retaliated by endorsing mayoral candidate Gery Chico over Emanuel in the 2011 race for mayor.

Atlanta Mayor Reed Condemns Trump Immigration Move

By James Salzer

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, January 26, 2017

Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed on Thursday joined his colleagues in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and other major metro areas in criticizing President Donald Trump's executive order on immigration in so-called "sanctuary cities."

Trump on Wednesday promised to halt federal grants to municipalities that do not comply with immigration officials in detaining criminally charged unauthorized immigrants for deportation.

Reed on Thursday condemned the move, saying Atlanta is a welcoming community that "has stood up for the civil and human rights of every person, and we will not waver now.

"Our city stands together," Reed said in a release on Thursday afternoon. "We believe the president's executive orders violate the principles of the U.S. Constitution. We believe these orders promote dangerous public policy, eroding trust between public safety agencies and the communities they serve, which will undermine public safety in the City of Atlanta and nationwide. We believe the courts will agree."

Hundreds marched earlier this month in downtown Atlanta in hopes the metro would become a "sanctuary city." Such a designation, however, would violate Georgia law, which requires full compliance with federal immigration authorities.

Reed said the city will remain open to all, including immigrants, and pledged that Atlanta will stand firm in its commitment.

Twin Cities Mayors Defy Trump On Sanctuary City Order

By Tim Nelson

Rochester (MN) Post-Bulletin, January 26, 2017

The mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul offered a defiant response to President Donald Trump's executive order against so-called sanctuary cities that he says "willfully violate federal law."

Under the order signed Wednesday, cities with policies against reporting undocumented immigrants to federal authorities could risk losing federal funding. Both Minneapolis and St. Paul could fall into that category.

Minneapolis won't drop its policy that blocks police from reporting immigration violations, Mayor Betsy Hodges said Wednesday.

The rule makes the city and its people safer because victims and witnesses of crime will feel as though they're able to call the cops, Hodges said.

"They will be safe to (call police), and their immigration status will not be questioned," she said. "That will stand in the city of Minneapolis as long as I am mayor."

City staff still are figuring out how much federal money might be at stake, Hodges said, but it could be millions or even tens of millions of dollars.

St. Paul gets about $13 million per year in federal funding. But Mayor Chris Coleman said he doesn't think Trump's order will apply to his city.

The order applies to cities that willfully violate federal law, Coleman said, and St. Paul's immigration policy does not.

For enforcement, the order directs the U.S. Attorney General and Department of Homeland Security to block federal grants — with some exceptions — to cities and other jurisdictions that don't report undocumented immigrants to the Immigration and Naturalization Service when they find them.

The order also directs Homeland Security to publish a list of crimes by undocumented immigrants and any jurisdictions that may have failed to detain them.

Supporters of Trump's order say it has been a long time coming.

Scott Johnson, a Twin Cities attorney and contributor to the conservative website Powerline, said he thinks Minneapolis and St. Paul have no business defying federal law as Trump is defining it, or as presidents have sought to define it for decades — as John F. Kennedy did in 1963.

"There isn't any more justification for sanctuary city policies than there was for George Wallace standing in the schoolhouse door to keep blacks from entering the University of Alabama," he said.

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Madison Mayor Won't Alter Sanctuary City Stance

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

MADISON, Wis. (AP) – Madison's mayor says his city will remain a sanctuary for immigrants in the United States illegally even though it could cost federal aid.

President Donald Trump signed an order Wednesday withholding Justice Department and Homeland Security funds from jurisdictions that bar local officials from communicating with federal authorities about someone's immigration status.

Madison Police Chief Mike Koval says his officers never inquire about immigration status. Dane County Sheriff's deputies ask about status when people are booked into jail and notify federal officials.

Mayor Paul Soglin says the city will continue to comply with federal detainer requests. But he maintains nothing states the city must detain immigrants as a condition for receiving funds and city police won't enforce federal immigration laws.

A sheriff's spokeswoman says that department hasn't discussed any changes.

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Colleges Brace To Shield Students From Immigration Raids

By Alan Gomez

USA Today, January 26, 2017

Colleges and universities around the country are preparing to defend their students from potential immigration raids under President Trump, but it's unclear how much power they actually have to shield their students.

School administrators have issued a range of pronouncements to assure their undocumented immigrant students that they won't help Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents track them down on their grounds.

New York University, Portland State University and the University of Pennsylvania are among colleges that have embraced the "sanctuary" moniker and declared that ICE agents will need a court order to step foot onto their campuses. The University of Miami School of Law is providing free, confidential legal consultations to its students, and Arizona State University is offering free counseling to those stressed out over their status.

Others, like Princeton University and Syracuse University, have been more hesitant. They don't embrace the "sanctuary" label, and while their administrators say they will

do what they can to protect students, they have warned students that their schools must comply with federal immigration laws.

Maria Rodriguez, executive director of the Florida Immigrant Coalition, said the range of options shows what a difficult line school administrations are walking.

"Some of these statements are symbolic resolutions of welcoming, but some of them have teeth," Rodriguez said. "The community leaders — not just elected officials, but university presidents — need to be much bolder in calling for these protection policies."

The sanctuary policies, which mirror those enacted by many states and churches around the country, were a direct response to Trump's vows on the campaign trail to dramatically increase immigration enforcement. On Wednesday, he started to make good on those promises by calling for a massive increase in deportations, 10,000 new ICE agents and revival of a federal program that deputizes local police officers to enforce immigration laws.

Still, the Trump administration has not said it will specifically target young undocumented immigrants attending colleges and universities, including the 750,000 young undocumented immigrants who were granted deportation protections under President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA.

Trump said during a speech at the Department of Homeland Security that he would focus deportations instead on undocumented immigrants who have criminal records or pose a threat to the country. When asked about the future of DACA recipients on Wednesday, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said of Trump: "He's a family man, he has a huge heart and he understand the significance of this problem."

ICE also has a standing policy that its agents should avoid conducting operations at "sensitive locations," such as schools, churches and hospitals, unless the situation is serious enough and the agent has been given approval by superiors. On Monday, ICE spokeswoman Jennifer Elzea said that policy remains in effect.

The Department of Homeland Security "is committed to ensuring that people seeking to participate in activities or utilize services provided at any sensitive location are free to do so without fear or hesitation," she said.

DACA recipients say that gives them little comfort.

Roberto Benavides, 27, is studying mechanical engineering at Miami Dade College. The Peru native, who first received DACA protection in 2013, said those temporary assurances don't make up for the harsh, anti-immigrant rhetoric he heard from Trump during the presidential campaign.

"We don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, we don't know what's going to happen for the next four years," Benavides said. "The presidents of all the universities here in South Florida have been very vocal supporting us. But we're very worried that President Trump will use executive powers to get the information on all of us and round us up."

There is reason for concern. Jessica Vaughan, director of policy studies at the Center for Immigration Studies, which advocates for lower levels of immigration, doubts that the Trump administration would specifically target college campuses to round up DACA recipients.

"(ICE) is not going to be walking through the library dragging people out or grabbing people in the dining hall," she said. "That's why I think this sanctuary campus movement is a little bit on the hysterical side."

But Vaughan, who has advised the Trump administration on its immigration enforcement options, said there are individual cases where ICE could be forced to grab people on campus. She said many undocumented immigrants were granted DACA despite having checkered criminal histories. And she said there are others who have committed crimes since gaining their protected status who could be targeted.

And on Wednesday, two executive orders signed by Trump make clear that any undocumented immigrant in the U.S. is a potential target for deportation. The orders say that no undocumented immigrant, or any "classes or categories" of them, would be protected.

"DACA should not be a free pass," Vaughan said.

Campuses Wary Of Offering 'Sanctuary' To Undocumented Students

By Julia Preston

New York Times, January 26, 2017

Janet Napolitano, president of the University of California, knows exactly what's at stake if President Trump shuts down an Obama administration program that has given work permits and protection from deportation to some 752,000 young undocumented immigrants. In 2012, in her previous job as secretary of Homeland Security, she signed the document — nothing more than a policy memo — that created the program.

So when alarm spread among immigrants on college campuses following Mr. Trump's election, Ms. Napolitano moved quickly to determine what the California system could do to shelter its students if he carried through on his pledges to cancel the program, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The university estimates that almost 3,800 among its 190,000 students are undocumented, many but not all with DACA.

Ms. Napolitano, retaining her law enforcement instincts, does not mention the word "sanctuary" when describing what the university could offer. "Sanctuary is such a vague term, we don't use it," she said crisply.

Instead, the university has published detailed principles of support for undocumented students, including assurances

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that campus police would not question students solely about their immigration status or join any cooperation agreements with federal immigration authorities under the Trump administration. Through the Davis campus law school, the university is organizing legal help for students detained for deportation.

Another worrisome prospect, Ms. Napolitano said, is that students could lose the permits that allow them to work. Undocumented students, including any losing DACA, will continue to pay in-state tuition and be eligible for state financial aid and for a revolving loan program funded, in part, by the university.

"We want to do everything we can so students are safe on our campuses," Ms. Napolitano said, "so they can focus on what they are there to do, which is to study."

Students at dozens of college campuses, galvanized by Mr. Trump's depictions of immigrants as criminals or potential terrorists, have pressed administrators to provide sanctuary for those without legal papers. But universities have had differing ideas about what that would mean in practice, and most leaders have been careful to say they would not defy the law.

Some institutions have flatly rejected sanctuary plans as encouraging lawbreaking. At New Mexico State University, the president, Garrey Carruthers, said that banning federal agents from campus might imperil its federal funding.

One of the first presidents to declare a sanctuary campus explicitly was Michael S. Roth of Wesleyan, who announced in November that it "will not voluntarily assist" any efforts by federal authorities to deport students. Soon after, John Coatsworth, the provost of Columbia University, said that it would not allow immigration agents on campus without a warrant.

Some administrators point out that student information, including their immigration status, is already protected under long-existing privacy laws requiring the authorities to show a warrant or court order before any data can be released without students' consent.

In Georgia, Emory, which is a private university, considered but ultimately decided against protective measures. "Emory is not seeking to establish itself as a sanctuary campus, for which there is no legal definition," the university said in a Jan. 4 statement. Taking a tougher line, the University of Georgia said that any call for sanctuary was "unacceptable" and added, "We expect our institutions to follow the law."

In his first formal briefing, on Jan. 23, Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary, suggested that canceling DACA would not be a priority for the new administration, but he did not provide any explicit reassurance that the program would continue.

Ms. Napolitano is still contemplating the bitter possibility that Mr. Trump will sweep away her most significant immigration accomplishment. She hopes to persuade him that the program is a good use of executive power, emphasizing that DACA immigrants pose little security risk because they pass background checks to get into the program.

Her message for Mr. Trump: "Why waste resources trying to deport good students who've done everything right?"

School Officials Pledge To Protect Students In The U.S. Illegally

Support swelled after President Trump took executive action.

By Lauren Camera, Education Reporter

U.S. News & World Report, January 26, 2017

In states across the country, school officials are pledging to defend illegal students. (Pastorscott/Getty Images)

In the wake of President Donald Trump's executive actions Wednesday, in which he promised to crack down on people in the country illegally and withhold federal funding from so-called sanctuary cities, a tide of school officials struck back, promising to protect such students and their families.

"L.A. Unified does not intend to cooperate with any effort to enforce [the] executive action, or with any other immigration enforcement activity," Los Angeles Unified School Board President Steve Zimmer said in a statement.

"President Trump's executive order on immigration is the single most significant act of mean spiritedness by a president in my lifetime," he said. "I pledge to families today what we have pledged every day since the election: Our schools are safe zones for every child and every family member."

Indeed, just hours after Trump signed the executive orders, the board of the Pittsburgh Public Schools unanimously adopted a resolution declaring itself a "sanctuary" campus. On Thursday, the Clark County School Board, which includes Las Vegas public schools, was set to consider a resolution affirming its ongoing commitment to students regardless of immigration status, which read in part that "the incoming presidential administration could cause a disruption to the safety and security" of students and their families.

And school officials in Eugene, Oregon, planned to meet over the weekend to draft a similar resolution.

In doing so, they join a growing list of places where school officials have made an array of pledges to defend students in the country illegally, ranging from ordering staff not to cooperate with immigration enforcement officials to reaffirming their commitment to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

"I think, given the conversation during President Trump's campaign, his comments raised the anxiety of a lot

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of our families and children in our schools," says Carolyn Edwards, the trustee board member at Clark County schools who proposed the resolution. "It's clear to me that we need to let our families know that they have a right to be here and we will respect that and honor that and educate every child that comes through our doors."

While there's no official tally, school boards that have passed such resolutions include Los Angeles and Oakland, California; Denver; Minneapolis; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and El Paso, Texas.

San Francisco Unified School District has not passed a resolution, but it blasted an automated phone message to parents after Trump's election, saying it would "continue to uphold San Francisco sanctuary city for all immigrants."

In 2014, approximately 725,000 students who were in the country illegally attended kindergarten through 12th-grade, or 1.3 percent of total enrollment, according to Pew Research Center estimates based on government data. About 3.9 million students were children of parents illegally living in the U.S., a figure that's been on a steady climb since the Great Recession.

Under federal law, public school districts are required to educate all students regardless of their immigration status or their parents' immigration statuses. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act prohibits school districts from providing third parties, such as the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, information contained in student records.

Declaring oneself a sanctuary school district or adopting a resolution supporting students residing in the country illegally doesn't provide the school or its students any additional legal protections. Indeed, federal law prohibits anyone from intentionally harboring such people from detection.

But the resolutions, school officials say, serve to quell anxiety and assure students and families that they plan to uphold the federal protections that already exist.

"As the Trump administration threatens our students and our way of life, we will double-down on our efforts to protect the right of all students to a public-school education – no matter where they live or where they're from," said Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president of the 3-million-member National Teachers Association, which has been distributing sample resolution language that school boards could choose to adopt.

In addition, a growing number of colleges and universities around the country are following suit – the most high-profile being the University of California system, whose president, Janet Napolitano, released in November a set of principles for supporting students in the U.S. illegally.

Earlier this week, Notre Dame faculty passed a sanctuary campus resolution, and hundreds of students and faculty staged a walkout in support of people illegally residing in the country. The resolution states, in part, that it will not allow Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection or U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to be on campus for enforcement purposes unless required by a warrant.

Flashback: Dem Mayors Didn't Protest Obama's Attack On 'Sanctuary Cities'

By Paul Bedard

Washington Examiner, January 26, 2017

Democratic mayors and local officials assailing President Trump's threat to cut off funding so-called "sanctuary cities" were silent when former President Obama did the same thing less than a year ago.

In July, Obama's Justice Department, pushed by House Republicans, notified sanctuaries that they would lose some federal funding if they continued to block federal immigration authorities from seizing illegals jailed for crimes.

At the time, Texas Rep. John Culberson, who had pushed Justice to act, told Secrets:

"Today, the DOJ notified local and state law enforcement agencies across America that they will no longer be eligible for federal law enforcement grants unless they certify under oath that their local or state laws do not interfere 'in any way' with requests for immigration information from federal authorities."

In a decision leading to the final action, a top Justice official told Culberson in February that the action was coming. In a letter, Assistant Attorney General Peter J. Kadzik said the department will require over 300 sanctuary cities cities, including Washington, D.C., New York and San Francisco, to abide by immigration laws or see their federal funds cut. If they are found to be in violation of federal laws, as in protecting illegal immigrants, Justice will move in with civil or criminal charges.

In his letter Culberson, Kadzik said that he will advise communities that receive federal money that they are "required to assure and certify that they are in compliance with all applicable federal laws, and will continue to be required to do so."

But either cities didn't believe it or knew the administration wouldn't follow through, no major protests hit the White House. In fact, near the end of his administration, big city Democratic mayors feeling Obama was on their side begged for new protections for illegals.

Mayor Bill de Blasio and 30 other city and county leaders asked Obama to extend executive protections for illegals.

Now he and several other Democratic mayors are threatening to sue Trump who has made a similar threat to cut funding to the cities that block the federal authorities.

Miami-Dade Orders Jails To Comply With 'sanctuary' Counties Crackdown

By Patricia Mazzei

Miami Herald, January 26, 2017

Fearing a loss of millions of dollars for defying immigration authorities, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez on Thursday ordered county jails to comply with federal immigration detention requests — effectively gutting the county's position as a "sanctuary" for immigrants in the country illegally.

Gimenez cited an executive order signed Wednesday by President Donald Trump that threatened to cut federal grants for any counties or cities that don't cooperate fully with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Since 2013, Miami-Dade has refused to indefinitely detain inmates who are in the country illegally and wanted by ICE — not based on principle, but because the federal government doesn't fully reimburse the county for the expense.

"In light of the provisions of the Executive Order, I direct you and your staff to honor all immigration detainer requests received from the Department of Homeland Security," Gimenez wrote Daniel Junior, the interim director of the corrections and rehabilitation department, in a brief, three-paragraph memo.

Unlike cities like San Francisco, Miami-Dade never declared itself a "sanctuary" and has resisted the label ever since the Justice Department listed the county as one in a May 2016 report. Foreseeing Trump's crackdown on "sanctuary" jurisdictions, the county asked the feds to review its status last year. A decision is still pending.

In an interview with the Miami Herald, Gimenez, a Republican who attended Trump's inauguration last week but said he voted for Hillary Clinton, said he made a financial decision. Last year, the county declined to hold some 100 inmates wanted by the feds. Keeping them in local jails would have cost about $52,000 — a relative drop in the bucket for a county with a total annual budget of $7 billion.

In contrast, the county's 2017 budget shows it's counting on receiving some $355 million in federal funds — money that subsidizes elderly services, beds for the homeless, police officers and other government expenses. It's unclear how much of that comes from the sort of grants Trump has threatened to deny sanctuary municipalities.

"I want to make sure we don't put in jeopardy the millions of funds we get from the federal government for a $52,000 issue," he said. "It doesn't mean that we're going to be arresting more people. It doesn't mean that we're going to be enforcing any immigration laws."

Thursday evening, when this Miami Herald story moved online, Trump posted a response on Twitter:

"Miami-Dade Mayor drops sanctuary policy. Right decision. Strong!"

County Commissioner Sally Heyman, a Democrat who sponsored the 2013 measure that stopped Miami-Dade's compliance with unreimbursed immigration detentions, said she was already working on legislation to undo the county's position so Miami-Dade wouldn't be targeted for federal cuts.

"It's a terrible situation," she said.

Heyman said she met with the feds in December in Washington, and earlier this month in Miami, to try to clarify Miami-Dade's stance. Immigration authorities told her they now have enough facilities to house detainees, so they should be able to pick up inmates from local jails within 48 hours — instead of forcing the county to incur the expense for their prolonged detention.

When cops arrest someone wanted by immigration authorities, the feds ask local jails for the courtesy of holding the detainees long enough for them to pick them up — even if that means keeping the detainees behind bars for longer than the period required for the non-immigration crime they were arrested for.

Heyman said Gimenez's strong-mayor position allows him to direct the corrections department in spite of the commission's 2013 resolution.

Howard Simon, executive director of the Florida chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, denounced Gimenez's action, saying that it "flies in the face of Miami's long history as a city of immigrants" and predicting it will "drive a wedge of distrust between law enforcement and our immigrant community."

"At the very least, a warrant from a court, not merely a request from a federal official, is required to detain somebody in jail," Simon said. "We will resist every attempt by our government to punish immigrants, regardless of their status."

Trump has also ordered the reinstatement of a Bush-era program known as Secure Communities that deputizes local police to enforce immigration laws — a controversial approach that critics say deters victims and witnesses of crime from coming forward. Gimenez noted that while his Thursday memo doesn't deal with that portion of Trump's action, he can't envision cops asking people for their papers.

"The federal government has to do its job," he said. "We don't ask them to write traffic tickets. We don't want police asking people immigration status."

Whether Miami-Dade would be affected by Trump's executive action on sanctuary cities was already questionable, given that there's no legal definition of what constitutes a "sanctuary." The federal law cited in Trump's order addresses jurisdictions that choose not to share information with the feds on immigration cases. No Florida municipality has explicitly set policy to obstruct federal immigration authorities; they've only objected to costly detentions or to detentions without deportation orders or judicial warrants.

The Democratic mayors of several big cities that defy federal immigration authorities as a matter of policy declared one after another Wednesday that they protect undocumented immigrants within their jurisdictions.

"I want to be clear: We're going to stay a sanctuary city," Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel said.

"We're going to defend all of our people, regardless of where they come from, regardless of their immigration status," New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

First 'Sanctuary City' Caves To Trump Demands

By Alan Gomez

USA Today, January 26, 2017

MIAMI — President Trump is hailing the first victory in his fight against "sanctuary cities" after a South Florida mayor ordered his employees on Thursday to begin working more closely with federal immigration authorities.

For years, Miami-Dade County has refused to hold some undocumented immigrants in its jails for federal immigration agents. But after Trump signed an executive order threatening to withhold federal funding from sanctuary cities, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez changed his mind.

Gimenez signed an executive order Thursday ordering the director of his corrections department to begin honoring all requests by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to hold immigration suspects in Miami-Dade County jails.

"Miami-Dade County complies with federal law and intends to fully cooperate with the federal government," the order read.

Gimenez said he made the decision to ensure that the county does not lose out on $355 million in federal funding it has coming in 2017.

Trump was quick to praise the decision, tweeting on Thursday: "Right decision. Strong!"

The term "sanctuary city" is a broad term that describes up to 300 communities that have policies protecting the nation's 11 million undocumented immigrants from deportation.

Some refuse to share any information with ICE agents. Some will share information, but refuse to hold undocumented immigrants for the sole purpose of giving ICE agents time to pick them up.

Trump vowed throughout the campaign to crack down on those cities. He often cited the example of Kate Steinle, a San Francisco woman who was shot and killed by an undocumented immigrant who had been released by the city's sheriff's department.

On Wednesday, Trump signed an executive order that directed the Department of Homeland Security to identify and label "sanctuary cities" in the U.S. It ordered the department to publish a weekly roundup of crimes committed by undocumented immigrants, including any local police departments that had custody of those immigrants but chose to release them.

The order also directed the departments of Justice and Homeland Security to identify federal grants that can be withheld from sanctuary cities that continue their practices. Those federal departments give out millions of dollars in grants each year to help local communities hire police officers, hold undocumented immigrants, improve community policing practices and crack down on violence against women.

"These jurisdictions have caused immeasurable harm to the American people and to the very fabric of our Republic," Trump's order read.

Big city mayors responded forcefully to Trump's order, with mayors from San Francisco to Chicago to New York vowing to fight back. Boston Mayor Marty Walsh said he would even allow undocumented immigrants to seek refuge in city hall.

"They can use my office," Walsh said. "They can use any office in this building."

A collection of police chiefs and sheriffs on Thursday also criticized Trump's attacks on sanctuary cities.

They say the practice of holding suspects in their jails solely for ICE has been ruled unconstitutional by federal courts. And they say the federal government should not try to force cities to carry out the federal responsibility of immigration enforcement.

"Law enforcement has a responsibility to work with federal immigration authorities. And the vast majority of police departments do," said Montgomery County (Md.) Police Chief Tom Manger. "But this notion that the federal government would cut funding to coerce local policies to change is troubling."

Miami-Dade Mayor Ends Sanctuary Status, Citing Trump's Order

By Nikita Vladimirov

The Hill, January 26, 2017

The mayor of Miami-Dade County, Fla., on Thursday ordered his local jails to comply with President Trump's executive order on immigration enforcement in light of the administration's threat to cut funding to places that act as "sanctuaries" for illegal immigrants.

"In light of the provisions of the Executive Order, I direct you and your staff to honor all immigration detainer requests received from the Department of Homeland Security," Mayor Carlos Gimenezwrote in a memo to the interim head of the corrections and rehabilitation department, as reported by the Miami Herald.

According to the newspaper, the country has never officially called itself a "sanctuary," and has asked the federal government to review its status in 2016.

"Miami-Dade County complies with federal law and intends to fully cooperate with the federal government," Gimenez wrote.

"I will partner with the Board of County Commissioners to address any issues necessary to achieve this end," the mayor added.

Trump tweeted about the decision Thursday night, calling it the "right decision."

Miami-Dade Mayor drops sanctuary policy. Right decision. Strong! https://t.co/MtPvaDC4jM— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) January 26, 2017

Trump's executive order, which instructs the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to cut funding to "sanctuary" cities and states, may end up costing Miami-Dade millions of dollars, the newspaper notes.

The orders signed on Wednesday also eliminate the "catch and release" policy that returned border-crossers to Mexico rather than detaining and processing them for deportation.

"From here on out, I'm asking all of you to enforce the laws of the United States of America. They will be enforced and enforced strongly," Trump said during his visit to DHS.

"Beginning today, the United States of America gets back control of its borders," he added.

Miami-Dade Mayor Orders Jails To Comply With Federal Immigration Detention Requests

By By Cristiano Lima, Marc Caputo

Politico, January 26, 2017

The mayor of Miami-Dade county on Thursday ordered county jails to comply with federal detention requests, citing President Donald Trump's executive orders concerning "sanctuary jurisdictions" for illegal immigrants.

But in doing so, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez tells POLITICO that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency needs to start cooperating with the county and paying for the detention of illegal immigrants in one of the nation's largest counties of foreign-born residents.

"If ICE asks us to detain someone we arrested --not for immigration issues because we're not immigration officers--we feel ICE should pay the bill and bear the responsibility for housing their inmate," Gimenez said.

"There is no change in broader policy," he said. "The change here is we just won't require a letter from ICE for each inmate. But we are not dropping our request to reimburse county taxpayers fairly for aiding the federal government."

Due to ICE's refusal to adequately reimburse the county during President Barack Obama's just-ended term, the county commission in 2013 passed a policy to refuse undocumented-immigrant detainer requests from the federal government. The move earned the county the reputation as a "sanctuary" for illegal immigrants, but Miami-Dade officials and others in the state bristled at the designation .

Gimenez noted that Trump's action to withhold federal funding from "sanctuary jurisdictions" technically didn't apply to the county because the president's order narrowly focused on agencies that violated a federal law that prohibited the obstruction of information requested by immigration officials.

Gimenez said his effort to accommodate Trump would hopefully incentivize his administration to cover the estimated $50,000 cost for housing about 200 inmates annually.

Still, the move essentially ends the county's standing as a "sanctuary" for undocumented immigrants.

Though the county never officially declared itself as a sanctuary, it has effectively served as one since the county's 2013 decision to stop aiding ICE.

"Miami-Dade County complies with federal law and intends to fully cooperate with the federal government," Gimenez wrote in a letter addressed to the county's department of corrections and rehabilitation. "I will partner with the Board of County Commissioners to address any issues necessary to achieve this end."

In all, about seven counties in Florida have refused to detain illegal immigrants due to ICE's actions. Other county sheriffs said they wouldn't detain potential immigrants identified by the agency because ICE's evidence is sometimes wrong and American citizens have been unfairly detained for immigration offenses, leading to lawsuits.

In a speech speech at the Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday, Trump vowed that his executive orders would save lives and "save billions and billions of dollars."

"For too long your office's agents haven't been allowed to properly do their jobs," Trump said. "You know that, right? Do you know that? Absolutely. But that's all about to change."

Trump added: "By working together, safe borders and economic cooperation, I truly believe we can enhance the relation between our two nations, to a degree not seen before, certainly, in a very, very long time. I think our relationship with Mexico is going to get better."

Onondaga County Sheriff: Feds Haven't Asked For Immigrant Detention On His Watch

By Mark Weiner

Syracuse (NY) Post-Standard, January 26, 2017

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – President Donald Trump's executive orders that threaten to punish communities harboring undocumented immigrants appear unlikely to be put to the test any time soon in Onondaga County.

Onondaga County Sheriff Gene Conway said today he has never received a request from federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials to detain an undocumented immigrant during his two years in office.

If he did receive such a "detainer request" from ICE, Conway said, he is likely to comply with federal authorities. A detainer request, also known as an immigration hold, is a request to local law enforcement to detain a non-citizen so that ICE can take custody of the person.

"It has always been my purpose to cooperate with law enforcement, whether it is local, state or federal," Conway told Syracuse.com.

Conway oversees the Onondaga County Justice Center jail, where about 10,000 people a year are held after being charged by Syracuse police or Onondaga County deputies. He said the charges faced by those at the jail are usually more serious than immigration violations.

"I would have to think that the situation here would be the result of someone allegedly committing a crime, and not so much the crime of being an illegal immigrant," Conway said.

He said his own deputies will not question people about their immigration or citizenship status.

"To just go out and be looking for illegal immigrants is not something we have done here, or something I intend to do," Conway said.

The issue of undocumented immigrants and local law enforcement boiled over this week when Trump signed an executive order allowing federal intervention in the way that local and state officials carry out policing and treat immigrants.

Trump told the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to find ways to cut off federal funding for so-called "sanctuary cities" that refuse to turn over undocumented immigrants to the federal government.

Mayor Stephanie Miner recently declared that Syracuse would be a sanctuary city. But the decision about how to handle undocumented immigrants in law enforcement custody appears to be out her hands.

Conway oversees the jail, and the Onondaga County Correctional Facility in Jamesville is overseen by the county.

An assistant to Onondaga County Corrections Commissioner William J. Hanna III referred questions today to a spokesman for County Executive Joanie Mahoney, who had no immediate comment about the undocumented immigrant detention policy.

Separately, data compiled by researchers at Syracuse University found ICE has issued 110 "detainer requests" since 2007 for prisoners held in Onondaga County.

Of those requests, ICE was given custody of the prisoner in 47 of the cases since 2007, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University, which gathers and produces research reports on government data.

Maryland's Howard County Could Become Official Sanctuary

By Talia Richman

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – Two Howard County Council members plan to push forward with legislation to declare their county a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants, even after President Donald Trump announced his intention to crack down on such jurisdictions.

Fulfilling one of many immigration-related campaign promises, Trump on Wednesday signed an executive order that will cut federal funding from localities that don't cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The Howard County Council still is expected to vote as early as Feb. 6 on a bill that would designate Howard County a "sanctuary county."

The proposed legislation, co-sponsored by Councilman Calvin Ball and Councilwoman Jen Terrasa, would mostly codify practices Howard County already employs with regard to undocumented immigrants. It would ban county employees – including police officers and elected officials – from enforcing federal immigration law, assisting immigration officers in gathering information, and inquiring into people's immigration status.

The legislation also states the policy would not apply if it was in conflict with federal law.

With Trump's threat looming, Ball said the bill is even more important than before.

"Given the fear and concern in our community from undocumented immigrants, our friends, our neighbors…this is a vital community conversation to have at this point in time," he said. "We're at a crossroads. We have to decide what kind of community we're going to be."

And although the bill doesn't represent dramatic changes in policy, Ball said there is value in having a "written policy that people can see and does not change without a public, transparent process."

County Executive Allan Kittleman called the legislation a "hollow political statement" and said he would use his veto power should it pass.

"I am not willing to jeopardize existing programs and services which benefit all Howard County residents to adopt a label that would not change any of the policies and practices that we already have in place," Kittleman said in a statement

The bill could also "compromise public safety efforts," he said, as the county has had success working with ICE to target drug activity, human trafficking and child pornography.

Ball said it is unclear if Trump's executive order would already impact the county, given the policies currently in practice.

With many questions still unanswered, Ball said the council is working to evaluate the executive order's implications, adding that Howard County does not receive "significant federal funding."

In two public hearings since the bill was introduced Jan. 3, residents have come forward on both sides of the issue.

"It has really blown away the usual input we get from the public," said county council public information officer Eric Solomon, noting that one hearing went until the early hours of the morning.

Those opposed expressed fear that the "sanctuary" designation would negatively affect the economy and lead to higher crime rates. Some cited the case of Kate Steinle, a woman who was killed in 2015 by an undocumented immigrant in San Francisco, a sanctuary city.

Trump ordered his administration to "make public a comprehensive list of criminal actions committed by aliens and any jurisdiction that ignored or otherwise failed to honor any detainers with respect to such aliens."

The Center for American Progress released a report Thursday that found there are an average of 35.5 fewer crimes committed per 10,000 people in sanctuary counties as opposed to non-sanctuary counties.

Howard County residents who testified in favor of the bill urged council members to affirm their values of inclusion.

A spokeswoman for immigrant advocacy group CASA said Howard County council members should continue their fight to become a "sanctuary county."

"They should stand on their strong principles," said Fernanda Durand, "their principles that are about compassion and keeping their cities safe."

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Las Vegas-area School District Taking Up Sanctuary Question

Fox News, January 26, 2017

LAS VEGAS – School trustees in Las Vegas, where almost half the students are Hispanic, are being asked to declare an immigration safe haven for students regardless of their citizenship status.

Clark County School District board member Carolyn Edwards is proposing a resolution on Thursday that she calls a response to President Donald Trump's promises to deport people living in the U.S. without legal permission.

Edwards says she doesn't know how the other six other board members will vote.

She says she wants to reinforce protections for children of immigrants under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals order that former President Barack Obama signed at a Las Vegas high school in November 2014.

The fifth-largest public school district in the U.S. reports that 46 percent of its 322,000 students are of Hispanic heritage.

Snyder: Immigration Isn't 'primary' Function Of Local Police

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

LANSING, Mich. (AP) – Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder says he doesn't think a primary function of state and local police is to act as immigration officers.

President Donald Trump's executive action on immigration instructs the Homeland Security secretary to engage with governors and local officials about agreements under which local law enforcement officials could investigate, apprehend and detain people in the country illegally.

Snyder told reporters Thursday he doesn't view immigration enforcement as one of the "primary" functions for state and local police.

The president is also expected to soon take steps to restrict the flow of refugees into the United States.

Snyder says Trump "has to make those decisions" because it's not a state responsibility, but regardless of national immigration policies, he will "continue to promote Michigan as a welcoming place for immigrants."

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Iowa City Officials: Immigration Order Shouldn't Affect City

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) – Iowa City officials say they don't think the city will lose funding despite President Donald Trump's move to cut federal funds to jurisdictions that don't cooperate in enforcing federal immigration laws.

The City Council adopted a policy last week saying the city won't enforce federal immigration law or commit local resources toward doing so, with some exceptions, the Iowa City Press-Citizen (http://icp-c.com/2koQia3) reported. The council's decision came after it declined to pursue a "sanctuary city" label.

Trump's order calls on the government to withhold federal grants and funding for "sanctuary cities," and gives the Secretary of Homeland Security discretion to designate any jurisdiction as such.

Trump's order cites a section of federal law that makes it illegal for federal, state and local government entities to prohibit sending or receiving an individual's immigration

status to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Iowa City's new policy states that city employees won't be restricted in communicating with federal immigration authorities.

City Attorney Eleanor Dilkes said the city's federal funding shouldn't be in jeopardy.

"If you look at the executive order, the only thing that gives me some pause is that the director of office and management and budget is directed to obtain and provide relevant information on all federal grant money that currently is received by any 'sanctuary jurisdiction,'" she said. "In terms of the specific Section 9, that is saying they want to ensure that states and political subdivisions comply with that section of the code, I can confidently say we do."

Iowa City's annual financial report shows it received more than $18 million in federal grants in fiscal year 2016. More than $213,000 came from U.S. Department of Justice grants.

Iowa City's policy includes exceptions for public safety threats, violent offenders or situations in which cooperation with ICE is necessary to protect the public.

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Connecticut Ready To Fight Trump's Immigration Policy

By Francesca Kefalas

Norwich (CT) Bulletin, January 26, 2017

Windham finds itself openly at odds with President Donald Trump a day after he signed two executive orders outlining his immigration policy.

In fact, all of Connecticut, with its policy of not turning over all undocumented aliens requested by federal officials, is likely to be in the crosshairs of Trump's new immigration policy.

With a stroke of the pen, Trump is trying to do what some Republicans in the last Congress were not able to do – punish "sanctuary" cities and states by withholding federal funds.

The Windham Town Council voted to become a Sanctuary City Jan. 17. The resolution states the town does not intend to violate federal law. But it also states that no employee — which would include the Willimantic fire department and police department — elected leader or appointed official is to ask about a person's immigration status unless it is warranted as part of a criminal investigation.

"I'm of course concerned," Town Councilor Dennis O'Brien, who put forward the resolution, said of Trump's actions. "Our resolution simply follows the law of the land, the law of the United State's Constitution, federal immigration law and the state's Trust Act. I'm concerned about what's happening but I'm also very proud of what we've done."

The town also held a pro-immigration rally at Jillson Square on Jan. 20 attended by nearly 200 people.

The term sanctuary – given to about 300 jurisdictions in the United States – is used to describe a wide range of policies, none of which actually protect an undocumented worker from deportation if federal law enforcement officials have him or her in custody.

San Francisco, Chicago, New York and other American cities have enacted policies limiting cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Other jurisdictions more narrowly restrict police from inquiring about the immigration status of detained suspects.

Hartford, Willimantic and New Haven are among dozens of cities with police departments that have established policies of not asking the immigration status of those they arrest or detain.

Connecticut in 2013 passed the "Trust Act" that allows state and local law enforcement agencies to ignore a federal "detainer," a request to hold an undocumented resident for immigration officials, if he or she hasn't committed a serious felony.

On Tuesday, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy said, "We don't actually have any true sanctuary cities in Connecticut."

"The president is bound by the Constitution of the United States, just as we are bound by the Constitution of the United States, and an executive order does not trump the Constitution of the United States," Malloy said. "If this order is written in such a way as to discriminate against individuals or communities or institutions, we'll defend that."

To Trump, Connecticut and its "sanctuary" cities are breaking the law.

"We are going to restore the rule of law in the United States," Trump said, addressing Department of Homeland Security employees after signing the directives. "Beginning today the United States gets control of its borders."

But Trump did not specify what federal funds would be withheld from jurisdictions determined to be "sanctuaries."

His executive order says the new Secretary of Homeland Security, John F. Kelly will use "the Declined Detainer Outcome Report or its equivalent and, on a weekly basis, make public a comprehensive list of criminal actions committed by aliens and any jurisdiction that ignored or otherwise failed to honor any detainers with respect to such aliens."

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget would then investigate and detail all federal grant money received "by any sanctuary jurisdiction," Trump's order said. Those jurisdictions would be stripped of federal funds, "except as mandated by law."

Windham Town Councilor James Flores said he believes this is an issue that will end up before the U.S.

Supreme Court. Flores said Windham and the state need to see how the issue unfolds but he believes the town's commitment to its undocumented immigrants is strong.

"We will continue to fight," Flores said.

Flores said the majority of the undocumented immigrants are good citizens and taxpayers doing important jobs in the community.

O'Brien said Windham was built by immigrants and its success as a textile city in the 1900s was due to immigrants.

"I hear people say those immigrants were here legally, but it was not the same process then to come into this country," O'Brien said. "We've always been a country of immigrants."

The concern for immigrants is compounded in Windham, which is also home to Eastern Connecticut State University, which has almost 50 Dreamer students. Dreamers are students who have taken advantage of President Barack Obama's executive order called the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. With it Obama directed ICE and other federal agencies involved in apprehending and deporting the undocumented to practice "prosecutorial discretion" with those who immigrated to the United States as children and were in the country without legal status.

Eastern has 47 Dreamers. College President Elsa Nunez said at the immigration rally that she is an immigrant and she plans to keep her students safe.

"We're going to stay together as long as we have to make sure the rights of these students are protected," Nunez said. "This country was built on the backs of immigrants, so why now are you starting to say somehow immigrants are not welcome in this country or they're not taking their place in this country?"

Nunez said 36 of the 47 students have a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

"These are very smart students," Nunez said. "They're going to be doctors, lawyers, lead community-based organizations in this country. They will make us proud."

Amy Vas Nunes said she was involved in the organizational meetings for the rally and knows there will be more. Nunes said she believes Trump's actions are going to spur more and more people to action. Nunes said she is concerned because she is reminded of what happened to her family during World War II, some of whom were Dutch Jews living in the Netherlands.

"People were exterminated," Nunes said. "So I'm very concerned about anything that starts down that Nazism road. I'm very sensitive to anything anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, anti-pick-your-people. We can't let that happen."

State Attorney General George Jepsen said he is trying to determine if and how Trump's actions would affect the state.

"My staff is reviewing the executive order and gathering other information, and so we are not in a position to comment in detail at this time," Jepsen said. "I remain committed to taking action within my authority to protect Connecticut residents whose rights are threatened by this or other actions of the Trump Administration."

The issue of whether jurisdictions that don't comply with federal detainers are breaking the law is subject to conflicting legal interpretations.

The Justice Department ruled last summer that local law enforcement agencies are required by federal law to at least share information about illegal immigrants. But the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia ruled in 2014 that local police departments are not required to hold undocumented immigrants for ICE.

'Worst kind of prejudice'

An attempt to pass a law that would strip federal law enforcement money from jurisdictions that don't share all information about undocumented aliens stopped or arrested by law enforcement faltered in the Senate in the last Congress.

That legislation would have put as much as $20 million in annual federal policing grants for Connecticut in jeopardy. Most of that money, more than $15 million, comes in the form of Community Development Block Grants.

If Trump wants to broaden the reach of his executive order, he'll need legislation like the bills several GOP lawmakers, including Rep. Duncan Hunter of California and Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, have tried to push through Congress.

Trump's executive orders also pressed jurisdictions to enter into memorandums of understanding with the federal government that would allow local police to enforce immigration law.

They also called for building a border wall with Mexico, hiring 10,000 additional border patrol agents and building more detention centers, all projects that would need authorization and appropriations from Congress.

Connecticut's Democratic lawmakers blasted Trump's proposals, calling for a comprehensive immigration bill instead.

"Public safety is critically important, but these actions detract from valid and vital law enforcement efforts instead of enhancing them," Sen. Richard Blumenthal said. "Local law enforcement needs the funding that President Trump's orders would cut and divert to a politically motivated show project."

Sen. Chris Murphy said, "President Trump's divisive policies that build walls and take money away from local police do nothing to make us safer.

"America's greatness is rooted in our immigrant history, and those who try to turn our country against immigrants are preying on the worst kind of prejudice," Murphy said.

Rep. Elizabeth Esty, D-5th District, said, "What President Trump offered today are not solutions.

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"Nothing the president did today will make us safer, grow our economy, or fix our broken immigration system. These actions are political gimmicks that will serve only to harass and tear apart law-abiding families," she said.

State Dems Pledge To Fight Trump Immigration Order

By Reid Wilson

The Hill, January 26, 2017

Democratic legislators and attorneys general are promising swift pushback against two executive orders President Trump signed Wednesday aimed at cracking down on illegal immigration.

One of the orders, which Trump signed during a visit to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), would put at risk federal grants to cities and counties that act as "sanctuary cities" — jurisdictions that refuse to comply with federal authorities' requests to hold some suspects while their immigration status is checked.

Another order would allow the DHS to begin construction of a wall along the southern border with Mexico. Trump also laid out plans to hire 5,000 new Border Patrol agents and 10,000 immigration officers.

The two orders, fulfilling Trump's campaign pledges to crack down on both legal and illegal immigration, drew swift condemnation from Democratic-led states with significant immigrant populations. Several attorneys general pledged to sue the administration over what they called illegal acts.

"The president lacks the constitutional authority to cut off funding to states and cities simply because they have lawfully acted to protect immigrant families," said Eric Schneiderman (D), New York's attorney general.

Schneiderman's office last week issued legal guidance to local governments in New York that laid out their rights to refuse immigration warrants issued by the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement or Customs and Border Protection agencies.

In California, Attorney General Xavier Becerra — sworn in to office just days ago — said his office would defend two state laws that allow local jurisdictions to ignore federal immigration orders.

"Executive orders do not change existing law. Executive orders cannot contradict existing law. And executive orders can be challenged for violating constitutional and legal standards in their enforcement," Becerra said in a statement.

California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon (D) said the state legislature would rely on its new legal counsel, former Attorney General Eric Holder, to guard against what Rendon called an overly vague order.

"The language is so broad that mass deportations are likely without real due process," Rendon said. "Our agricultural industry and other economic sectors, businesses large and small, depend on an immigrant workforce. If those businesses suffer, the national economy will suffer too, and that's all on Trump."

Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson (D) said Trump's order "raises significant legal issues that my office will be investigating closely."

The early pledges of action from Democratic legislators and legal officers presages what is likely to be a concerted effort by blue states to tie the Trump administration up in court. Democratic officials have said they will fight the Trump administration on everything from immigration to climate change to repealing the Affordable Care Act, another key element of the president's agenda.

"You could call us a bulwark against Trumpism. You could call us a beacon of light in darkness. You could call us a sanctuary for a variety of people who might be otherwise victims of instability that comes out of the White House," Washington Gov. Jay Inslee (D) said in a recent interview. "I think all of those things fit. We do intend to work in concert as much as we can."

Why Police Worry About Trump's 'Sanctuary Cities' Crackdown

By Patrik Jonsson

Christian Science Monitor, January 26, 2017

January 26, 2017 —President Trump on Wednesday essentially told police nationwide to start looking for undocumented immigrants and reporting them to federal immigration authorities for deportation.

On Thursday, Capt. Jeff Scroggin, a spokesman for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department gave Mr. Trump a simple reply: No.

Enforcing federal immigration law "is just not what we do, which is why our policy will not change, even with the new Trump executive action," says Captain Scroggin, a 32-year veteran, in an interview with the Monitor.

Scroggin's view – which is supported by California's attorney general – is pitting hard-earned policing knowledge and wisdom against Trump's effort to crack down on "sanctuary cities." In an executive order signed Wednesday, the president said cities would risk losing federal money if they didn't commit their police to enforcing federal immigration laws.

But for many police officers, the executive order points down worrisome paths.

On one hand, they say, public safety increases when trust in police rises. Using local cops as immigration agents, they say, would shut the door on vast communities of immigrants, creating more opportunity for criminal activity, not less.

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What's more, they add, police are already being asked to do too much – adding immigration enforcement would only stretch them further.

Over both these concerns looms a fraught legal question: Should the government be able to essentially commandeer local police as federal agents? Some municipalities are already voluntarily enforcing federal immigration law, but Trump's executive order would impose huge costs on those who don't comply – challenging the rights of states and localities to set their own priorities.

For that reason and others, "Trump will face massive political resistance and challenges in the courts," said Ingrid Eagly, a professor at the University of California at Los Angeles School of Law, in The New York Times.

The executive order directed the Homeland Security secretary to work with localities and states to enforce immigration law. Those that do not comply can be designated "sanctuary jurisdictions" and have their federal grants blocked.

Like many conservatives, Trump says undocumented immigrants with rap sheets are a fundamental threat to public safety, and sanctuary cities – which vow not to share immigration information with the federal government – are complicit.

"Sanctuary city policies are dangerous to citizens who are lawfully in this country," Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry said, according to NBC News.

But numerous studies suggest undocumented immigrants are no more violent or unlawful as a group than US citizens are.

Caught in the middle are officers like Scroggin, who see the prospect of doing federal immigration work as antithetical to their vow of duty.

"We're the melting pot of the world out here in California, there are a lot of immigrant communities that we serve, so we need to make sure that they feel comfortable" calling the cops for help, he says. "The most important thing we strive to do is to build enough trust so that residents provide information that makes this community safer. It's a team effort."

Most US police departments agree. Moreover, they suggest that many police departments already cooperate with the federal government. Even in sanctuary cities, police often notify federal authorities when they have an undocumented person in custody who has committed serious crimes.

The concern is that the executive order will remove police departments' ability to focus on what they think is most important.

"Police leaders across the country are aligned on this issue," Seattle Police Chief Kathleen O'Toole told NBC News.

At this point, it's not clear how much Trump could back up his threats. The president does hold sway over some grants but cannot redirect funding directly approved by Congress.

By one estimate, New York City could face $7 billion in federal losses if the city refuses Trump's order. Or Trump could withdraw only funds that are attached to the federal immigration mission – a minuscule amount, by comparison.

Even Scroggin acknowledges that enforcement priorities in places like New York City and Los Angeles County could change if President Trump is able to hold back billions of federal dollars. But others say the issue is not just about punishing sanctuary cities but also persuading others not to join their ranks.

"This is not just a legal battle or a law enforcement issue – to a large extent it's political, too," said Jessica Vaughan of the Center for Immigration Studies, a think tank that favors protectionist immigration measures, to the Orange County Register. "The goal is not to go around whacking sanctuary cities. It's to identify funding that can be cut off so that cities might be dissuaded from adopting those policies."

Contrary To Trump's Claims, Immigrants Are Less Likely To Commit Crimes

By Richard Pérez-Peña

New York Times, January 26, 2017

A central point of an executive order President Trump signed on Wednesday — and a mainstay of his campaign speeches — is the view that undocumented immigrants pose a threat to public safety.

But several studies, over many years, have concluded that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than people born in the United States. And experts say the available evidence does not support the idea that undocumented immigrants commit a disproportionate share of crime.

"There's no way I can mess with the numbers to get a different conclusion," said Alex Nowrasteh, immigration policy analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute, which advocates more liberal immigration laws.

Mr. Trump often cites specific cases of undocumented immigrants committing or being charged with crimes, like the 2015 killing in San Francisco of Kathryn Steinle, whose accused killer had repeatedly been convicted of crimes and deported, yet slipped back into the United States.

His executive order states that many people who enter the country illegally "present a significant threat to national security and public safety." It directs the Department of Homeland Security to publish a weekly "comprehensive list of criminal actions committed by aliens and any jurisdiction that ignored or otherwise failed to honor any detainers with respect to such aliens."

Analyses of census data from 1980 through 2010 show that among men ages 18 to 49, immigrants were one-half to one-fifth as likely to be incarcerated as those born in the

United States. Across all ages and sexes, about 7 percent of the nation's population are noncitizens, while figures from the Justice Department show that about 5 percent of inmates in state and federal prisons are noncitizens.

Opponents of immigration often point out that in federal prisons, a much higher share of inmates, 22 percent, are noncitizens. But federal prisons hold a small fraction of the nation's inmates, and in many ways, it is an unusual population. About one-third of noncitizen federal inmates are serving time for immigration offenses — usually re-entering the country illegally after being deported — that are not covered by state law.

With about 43 million foreign-born people living in the country, and about 11 million of them here illegally, immigrants are a large slice of the population, and are no doubt to blame for a large share of the crime. The Department of Homeland Security has estimated that 1.9 million noncitizens living in the United States — whether legally or illegally — have been convicted of criminal offenses and could be deported. The Migration Policy Institute, a research group that does not advocate immigration policies, estimated that 820,000 of those people were in the country illegally, including 300,000 with felony convictions.

"The tone and tenor of the president's executive order blurs the line between who's a serious criminal and who isn't," and between documented and undocumented immigrants, said Randy Capps, the institute's director of research for United States programs. There is no national accounting of criminality specifically by people who are in the country illegally. But Mr. Nowrasteh said he had analyzed the available figures and concluded that undocumented immigrants had crime rates somewhat higher than those here legally, but much lower than those of citizens.

Immigrants Train To Defend Themselves, Families In Trump Era

NBC News, January 26, 2017

While President Donald Trump dedicated his inauguration speech last week to the "forgotten men and women" of the United States, another group of forgotten people in small towns and big cities across America prepared to defend their families, friends and neighbors from policy changes that could put them at high risk for deportation.

"Divide into two groups," instructs Ravi Ragbir, executive director of the New Sanctuary Movement Coalition—an immigrant rights group based in New York City. "Do you want to be an ICE agent? Or an immigrant?"

Every Thursday evening, a small group of undocumented immigrants gathers in a church in downtown Manhattan — which they call a "safe space" — to share their stories, get legal advice, and role-play real life detentions.

On this particular evening, the support group plays out the story of a green card holder who was detained by immigration agents outside of a New York City homeless shelter five days before his second son was born in 2014.

"We are preparing them to defend their rights against possible raids during the Trump administration," Ragbir told NBC Latino. "Role-playing is very important because it becomes automatic, it mentalizes people for when they are intercepted or accosted by agents. And unless you are doing this regularly, you become shocked and traumatized."

Trump signed an executive order on Wednesday that will direct federal funding to building a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. Its one in a series of actions aimed at cracking down on immigration.

On Inauguration Day, the president also got moral support from a Southern Baptist pastor, the Rev. Robert Jeffress, who compared Trump's intended immigration and infrastructure policies with the biblical story of the builder Nehemiah — chosen by God to build a wall around Jerusalem for the protection of its citizens.

But for other religious leaders, Jeffress' inauguration sermon contradicts the communal spirit of God.

"God characterizes our religious traditions with compassion," said Juan Carlos Ruiz, a Mexican priest and co-founder of the New Sanctuary Movement in New York. "God is welcoming and calls on us to build bridges, not walls."

The New Sanctuary Movement Coalition holds a workshop in a church where participants role play immigration arrest scenarios to learn what their rights are and how to express them. The January 2017 workshop have become more urgent as President Donald Trump has signed executive orders ramping up immigration enforcement. New Sanctuary Movement Coaliton / New Sanctuary Movement Coalitio

For Ruiz, and other immigration rights advocates, walls divide people into insiders and outsiders, natives and immigrants. And these divisions, the Mexican priest emphasized, can underpin hate and distrust.

"We cannot protect ourselves with an ideology of hatred towards others," Ruiz told NBC Latino. "We cannot confine ourselves with an us vs. them mentality because it denies humanity. And immigration is a global crisis that prevents us from seeing the humanity of others."

While immigrants are often characterized as loners, outsiders, who bounce from job to job and place to place like cowboys (and cowgirls) on a frontier, New Sanctuary Movement organizers remind immigrants that they are not alone, that immigrants are like trees with deep roots planted in American families, parishes and communities. And these roots can empower them to strengthen their faith and defend their rights.

"We cannot wait for politicians alone to decide our rights," said an undocumented Mexican mother with

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American-born children who attended a New Sanctuary meeting. "We are transnational families. We come here to work. We help build up our communities. And we need to work with our communities to become a solution."

Trump To Publicize Crimes By Illegal Immigrants In 'sanctuary Cities'

New York Post, January 26, 2017

President Trump plans to publish a weekly list of crimes committed by illegal immigrants in the Big Apple and all other sanctuary cities that do not cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

The list will inform citizens and others about "public safety threats associated with sanctuary" cities, according to an executive order Trump signed Wednesday.

"The [Homeland Security] Secretary shall utilize the Declined Detainer Outcome Report or its equivalent and, on a weekly basis, make public a comprehensive list of criminal actions committed by aliens and any jurisdiction that ignored or otherwise failed to honor any detainers with respect to such aliens," the order said.

Mayor de Blasio said that New York — one of about 300 sanctuary cities across the US — would not change it's policy in the face of Trump's threat to withhold federal funding from cities that do not play ball with his order.

The NYPD said Wednesday the city has a list of roughly 170 criminal offenses that are not covered by the sanctuary policy, and that the department notifies the feds when illegal immigrants are charged with those crimes.

The list includes serious crimes such as felony assault, rape, murder and terrorism as well as gun smuggling and witness tampering.

Dreamers Watch As The Trump Assault Begins

By Dorothy Wickenden

The New Yorker, January 26, 2017

The executive orders rain down like tweets now from the Oval Office. Some are nearly as gestural, as off the wall, as the ravings of @realDonaldTrump. Even congressional Republicans are unbriefed, caught by surprise by some of the edicts issued daily, or more than daily, by President Donald Trump. That was the case on Wednesday, when a flurry of executive orders announced the elements of an immigration crackdown: construction of the much promised southern border wall, a vast increase in enforcement agents and detention facilities, a federal assault on the hundreds of American cities that have declined to act as immigration police. This failure to consult, not only with political allies but with the relevant government agencies, or legal specialists, or experts of any sort, is what makes some of the orders seem slight and unrealistic. Obamacare shall be abolished, details to come. The executive orders are reportedly being written by a pair of White House aides, Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller, who also wrote Trump's painful Inaugural Address. Miller became known during the campaign for whipping up crowds with the chant "Build the wall!" Bannon is the former editor of the far-right Web site Breitbart News.

At the same time, there are areas of policy where the executive can have a large and immediate effect. Syrian refugees can and will be turned away, starting now, in their thousands. Aid to women's-health programs in developing countries can and will be blocked. Environmentally ruinous oil-pipeline projects can be revived, coal leasing on public lands resumed. The honor of the United States can be tarnished by dirty dealing. These initiatives don't have to wait on congressional funding. Illegal immigration, Trump's signature issue as a candidate, insofar as he ran on conventional issues, is different. It's an enormous, unwieldy problem, far more easily demagogued than solved. And yet there were Obama executive orders, promulgated in lieu of comprehensive reform legislation that was desperately needed but never passed, which Trump could now reverse, notably the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

DACA gives, in two-year renewable installments, relief from the threat of deportation to young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. Applicants are closely vetted. They must have lived in the United States since 2007, be enrolled in school or recent graduates, and have no serious criminal record. More than seven hundred and fifty thousand young people, known as Dreamers, have been accepted to the program. They are able to work legally, get a driver's license, apply for scholarships. In the states that allow it, they qualify for in-state college tuition. Trump, during his campaign, promised to cancel DACA.

Some of Trump's supporters have been outraged by each passing day of his Presidency in which DACA has not been eliminated. They calculate that, between renewals and new applications, eight hundred more "illegals" are receiving DACA protection every day. The delay in cancelling the program has been called "already a betrayal" on the popular RedState blog. Breitbart News suspects "Chamber of Commerce Republicans in Trump's White House—led by Chief of Staff Reince Priebus," in league with House Speaker Paul Ryan, of pushing some cheap-foreign-labor agenda forward. Anti-immigrant activists have expressed fears that pro-business globalists are getting the better of the Bannon nationalist faction on this defining issue. And Preibus, asked on Fox News, on Sunday, about eliminating DACA, took a notably unrushed line, saying, "I think we're going to work with House and Senate leadership, as well as to get a long-term solution on that issue." Trump himself, for that matter, intimated to Time, in December, after the magazine made him its Person of the Year, that he viewed the Dreamers

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benignly. "We're going to work something out that's going to make people happy and proud," he said. "They got brought here at a very young age, they've worked here, they've gone to school here. Some were good students. Some have wonderful jobs. And they're in never-never land because they don't know what's going to happen."

Senator Jeff Sessions, Trump's nominee for Attorney General, is a staunch opponent of DACA—and of immigration generally, both legal and illegal. In 2014, Sessions pushed, unsuccessfully, for a vote on legislation, passed by the House, to kill DACA. He has worked against nearly every immigration-reform measure in the Senate in the past twenty years, and in 2013 he led the fight against a bipartisan comprehensive reform bill that President Barack Obama was eager to sign. Earlier this month, at a Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing, Sessions called the executive order that created DACA "very questionable, in my opinion, constitutionally." Sessions, who will most likely be confirmed, was the first senator to endorse Donald Trump during the Republican primaries. They bonded as immigration hard-liners. Stephen Miller, the mob rouser, worked for Sessions before he went to work for Trump. Sessions told Politico, "A Trump victory means that we will, I think, in [a] rather short period of time, end the lawlessness at the border and will bring the country around to what I think a substantial majority favor." In fact, according to a recent poll, a substantial majority of Americans favors the continued existence of DACA.

But those are not the folks who elected Trump. And Trump's decision-making, as we have come to learn, is fickle, indifferent to fact, and easily swayed. For example, his insistence, somehow both dogged and wild-eyed, that he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton only because three to five million people voted illegally—every one of them against him—took several bizarre turns this week. When asked, at a closed-door meeting with congressional leaders on Monday, for evidence for his extraordinary claim, he reportedly cited Bernhard Langer, the "very famous" German golfer. His friend Langer, Trump said, had told him about waiting in a line in Florida to vote, and then being turned away. Meanwhile, there were Latinos on either side of him who, Trump said, didn't look as if they ought to be allowed to vote—this was according to three staff members who were at the meeting, and were interviewed by the Times—and yet they cast provisional ballots. Priebus quickly changed the subject. The story leaked out, however, causing Langer's daughter, Christina, to point out, when reached by the Times, that her father is a German citizen, cannot vote in the United States, and is not, in fact, friends with President Trump.

As if this were not mortifying enough, Trump, after hearing a reporter tell his press secretary that fraud on such a scale would seem to merit a major investigation, vowed, naturally, to launch a major investigation. The President's aides have since tried to muddy the water—it wasn't really Langer who was trying to vote, it was Langer's friend—but nothing makes it any better. Trump's thinking is, from all appearances, frighteningly disordered. He is not talking nonsense to distract us, the public, from some other topic, or to keep the spotlight on him. The spotlight is on him. He is simply talking nonsense, and he is doing so in the service of—or, perhaps, in the throes of—yet another narcissistic fantasy.

From the perspective of undocumented immigrants generally, it is unfortunate that Trump has settled on them as the main agents of this historic voter fraud. The association can only further prejudice the President and certain of his followers against them. For the Dreamers, there may still be hope that the sympathetic benevolence he expressed toward them last month does not change—does not go south after, say, a conversation with Jeff Sessions, or a TV news story that strikes Trump wrong somehow. The Times published a remarkable story this week about the President's impulsive decision-making. It tracked his habits and measured his reaction time. The number of minutes between the end of Bill O'Reilly's show on Fox News on Tuesday night, after a segment about violence in Chicago, and Trump's Twitter post declaring, "I will send in the Feds!"? Twenty-five. The time between a Fox News morning report in November, after the election, about college students burning an American flag and Trump's tweet saying "Nobody should be allowed to burn the American flag—if they do, there must be consequences—perhaps loss of citizenship or year in jail!"? Thirty minutes exactly. We are not all as vulnerable as the Dreamers in this moment. But we are all caught in this moment.

Police Divided Over Trump's 'Sanctuary City' Order

By Kevin Johnson

USA Today, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON — National law enforcement groups are sharply divided over President Trump's plan to crack down on sanctuary cities that shield illegal immigrants from deportation, as some warn that law enforcement's already fraught relationship with minority communities could be further damaged by pressing local officers to enforce immigration laws.

Central to Trump's order aimed at up to 300 communities that maintain policies protecting the undocumented is a threat to withhold federal money from cities that do not comply with federal immigration enforcement efforts. Although the order contains a provision that could allow funding to continue to flow to local police, pending approval by the attorney general, some law enforcement and municipal authorities described the action as akin to unlawful "coercion."

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"Local police departments work hard to build and preserve trust with all of the communities they serve, including immigrant communities,'' a joint statement issued by the Major Cities Chiefs Association and the U.S. Conference of Mayors said. "Immigrants residing in our cities must be able to trust the police and all of the city government.''

It is not the first time the chiefs' group, a coalition of top police officials representing the largest agencies in the country, has counseled against expanding local police responsibilities to include immigration enforcement.

Four years ago, the group issued its own "immigration policy paper'' warning that local officers lacked basic resources, training and "clear authority'' to assist in such matters.

"Immigration laws are very complex and the training required to understand them significantly detracts from the core mission of local police to create safe communities,'' the association stated.

Within hours after Wednesday's order was issued, Thomas Manger, president of the chiefs' association, and Tom Cochran, executive director of the mayors' conference, called for a meeting with the Justice Department for guidance on how to proceed. Trump's attorney general nominee, Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, known for his hard-line approach to immigration policy, is awaiting a Senate confirmation vote

Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, said that police operating in so-called sanctuary cities have been shadowed by the "false perception'' that they have been held back from pursuing serious criminals.

"That is just not correct,'' said Wexler, who also chaired a Department of Homeland Security panel that examined security in heavily immigrant communities. "When it came to dealing with serious criminals, there was no ambiguity on what needed to be done.''

At the same time, Wexler said, police should not be substitutes for everyday immigration agents, enforcing status disputes and other minor civil violations.

"Local police need to have the community's confidence and know they can be free to report problems without consequences,'' he said. "If people are afraid to come to the police, that domestic violence incident today will be a homicide tomorrow and that's in no one's interest.''

Trump's directive, meanwhile, won the endorsement of the nation's largest police union and a national coalition of sheriffs.

"Previous solutions called for an unequivocal end to all federal grants for recalcitrant jurisdictions and there was a real concern about this approach,'' Fraternal Order of Police President Chuck Canterbury said. The union said the provision in Trump's order that preserved the eligibility of police in sanctuary cities for federal grants, with the attorney general's approval, sealed its support.

"The FOP opposed several bills in the previous Congress which would have blocked state and local law enforcement grants to sanctuary cities because in most cases these sanctuary jurisdictions were established by policymakers at the local level,'' Canterbury said. "The FOP argued that it was unfair to penalize the law enforcement agencies serving these jurisdictions for the political decisions of elected officials which prohibited or impeded cooperation with federal agencies.''

Jonathan Thompson, executive director of the National Sheriffs' Association, said the president's pledge add thousands to the ranks of the Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement would ease the dependence on local law enforcement.

"It's key to remember that for too long sheriffs were the meat in the immigration enforcement sandwich,'' Thompson said. "No more. (Trump) is hiring 10,000 enforcement officers, which we have been calling for.''

Trump's Immigration Crackdown Will Be Golden For Private Prisons

By Laurie Roberts

Arizona Republic, January 26, 2017

Donald Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration is stupendous news for the private prison industry.

Already, 2017 looked to be a profitable year with his election. Now comes Trump's plan to lock up more immigrants who are here illegally.

Well, he's going to have to put them someplace until the backlogged immigration courts can hold deportation hearings. Where better than a prison prison, where a major of those currently detained while awaiting deportation reside?

Before Trump, they lost their federal contracts

"The reality is, DHS is not going to have the ability to detain all these folks," David Inserra, an analyst at the Heritage Foundation, told Daily Beast reporter Betsy Woodruff. "You have to rely on the private contractors."

Who, no doubt, are counting their billion-dollar blessings today. This after last year's announcement that they would lose their federal contracts.

In August, the U.S. Justice Department announced it would stop using private prisons, declaring them less safe than government-run prisons and no cheaper to operate.

"They simply do not provide the same level of correctional services, programs, and resources; they do not save substantially on costs; and as noted in a recent report by the Department's Office of Inspector General, they do not maintain the same level of safety and security," then-Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates said, in announcing that the

feds are "reducing – and ultimately ending – our use of privately operated prisons."

But that was B.T. (Before Trump).

After Trump, everything's golden for GEO Group

Now, Seeking Alpha, a website offering investment advice, is predicting that the stock of the nation's second-largest private prison operator, The GEO Group, could jump 25 percent this year.

"While multiple sectors have outperformed the broader market in the Trump Rally, one of the biggest winners has been The GEO Group, (NYSE:GEO), a private-prison focused REIT that is up almost 70% since November 8," the website said. "The basic rationale is that a Trump administration will emphasize private industry and law-and-order, both which will serve as significant macro tailwinds for the private prison industry over the next 4 years."

Just coincidentally, I'm sure, Politico has reported that GEO Group recently hired two former aides of Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, who will head Trump's Justice Department.

GEO already does well in Arizona. Last year, Gov. Doug Ducey gave a $2.5 million state subsidy to the Florida-based company, which operates the private prison near Kingman and coincidentally, I'm sure, is a campaign contributor.

Private prisons have long been a sacred cow at the state Capitol. Well-connected lobbyists spread around campaign cash to ensure that their interests are paramount and their prisons are full – or if not, they're paid as if they are full anyway.

Now, with Trump's election, they're back on solid (gold) ground with the feds.

Why Trump's Executive Order On Sanctuary Cities Is Unconstitutional

By Ilya Somin

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

Yesterday, President Donald Trump signed an executive order denying federal funding to sanctuary cities – jurisdictions that choose not to cooperate with federal efforts to deport undocumented immigrants. The order has serious constitutional problems. Unless interpreted very narrowly, it is both unconstitutional and a very dangerous precedent. Trump and future presidents could use it to seriously undermine constitutional federalism by forcing dissenting cities and states to obey presidential dictates, even without authorization from Congress. The circumvention of Congress makes the order a threat to separation of powers, as well.

The order indicates that sanctuary cities "that fail to comply with applicable Federal law do not receive Federal funds, except as mandated by law." More specifically, it mandates that "the Attorney General and the [Homeland Security] Secretary, in their discretion and to the extent consistent with law, shall ensure that jurisdictions that willfully refuse to comply with 8 U.S.C. 1373 (sanctuary jurisdictions) are not eligible to receive Federal grants, except as deemed necessary for law enforcement purposes by the Attorney General or the Secretary."

Section 1373 mandates that "a Federal, State, or local government entity or official may not prohibit, or in any way restrict, any government entity or official from sending to, or receiving from, the Immigration and Naturalization Service information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual."

There are two serious constitutional problems with conditioning federal grants to sanctuary cities on compliance with Section 1373. First, longstanding Supreme Court precedent mandates that the federal government may not impose conditions on grants to states and localities unless the conditions are "unambiguously" stated in the text of the law "so that the States can knowingly decide whether or not to accept those funds." Few if any federal grants to sanctuary cities are explicitly conditioned on compliance with Section 1373. Any such condition must be passed by Congress, and may only apply to new grants, not ones that have already been appropriated. The executive cannot simply make up new conditions on its own and impose them on state and local governments. Doing so undermiens both separation of powers and federalism.

Even aside from Trump's dubious effort to tie it to federal grants, Section 1373 is itself unconstitutional. The Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled that the federal government may not "commandeer" state and local officials by compelling them to enforce federal law. Such policies violate the Tenth Amendment.

Section 1373 attempts to circumvent this prohibition by forbidding higher-level state and local officials from mandating that lower-level ones refuse to help in enforcing federal policy. But the same principle that forbid direct commandeering also count against Section 1373. As the late conservative Justice Antonin Scalia explained in Printz v. United States, the purpose of the anti-commandeering doctrine is the "[p]reservation of the States as independent and autonomous political entities." That independence and autonomy is massively undermined if the federal government can take away the states' power to decide what state and local officials may do while on the job. As Scalia put it in the same opinion, federal law violates the Tenth Amendment if it "requires [state employees] to provide information that belongs to the State and is available to them only in their official capacity." The same is true if, as in the case of Section 1373, the federal government tries to prevent states from controlling their employees' use of information that "is available to them only in their official capacity."

Some defenders of Trump's policy claim that the anti-commandeering rule does not apply to federal laws that

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mandate disclosure of information. I addressed that argument here. Quite simply, there is no information-disclosure exception to the Tenth Amendment, and it would be very dangerous for the courts to create one.

The Trump administration might try to push a more expansive interpretation of Section 1373 that goes beyond information-sharing and extends to actual detention of undocumented immigrants targeted for deportation. That would only make the law more clearly unconstitutional than if it were limited to information. Pushing state officials to detain people is an even greater interference with state "independence and autonomy" than pressuring them to disclose information.

Unlike the question raised by Trump's attempt to impose grant conditions not authorized by Congress, the ant-commandeering issue raised by Section 1373 has not yet been directly addressed by the Supreme Court (though the law was upheld in a badly flawed lower court decision back in 1999). We cannot be certain what will happen when and if the justices take up this issue. But the principles underlying the Court's anti-commandeering cases should lead it to strike down this law.

The constitutional issues raised by Trump's executive order are not mere technicalities. If the president can make up new conditions on federal grants to the states and impose them without specific, advance congressional authorization, he would have a powerful tool for bullying states and localities into submission on a wide range of issues. Such an executive power-grab also undermines separation of powers. Congress, not the president, has the constitutional authority to attach conditions to federal grants to state governments.

Even if the power-grab is limited to withholding funds when states or localities violate other federal laws and regulations, it is still a grave menace. There are literally thousands of federal laws and regulations on the books. No jurisdiction can fully comply with all of them. If the president can withhold funds from any state or locality that violates any federal law, without needing specific authorization from Congress, he would have sweeping authority over state officials.

Trump's order is exactly the kind of high-handed federal coercion of states and undermining of separation of powers that outraged conservatives under Obama. In fact, Obama did not go as far as Trump seems to do here. Obama never claimed sweeping authority to impose new conditions on federal grants beyond those specifically imposed by Congress. Even those who sympathize Trump's objectives in this case should pause to consider whether they want presidents to have this kind of power going forward. Trump's use of it today could easily serve as a model for a liberal Democratic president tomorrow.

I have my reservations about some aspects of the Supreme Court's conditional spending precedents. The doctrine is far from ideal. But it is far preferable to letting the president make up conditions and impose them without congressional authorization.

The administration could potentially avoid these constitutional problems if they interpret the order very narrowly. The text states that federal funds will only be withheld from sanctuary cities "to the extent consistent with law." taken literally, that might bar any withholding of funds not explicitly conditioned on compliance with Section 1373. After all, the Constitution is the law, and the Constitution does not allow the president to impose grant conditions not specifically authorized by Congress. But such a narrow interpretation would make the order largely superfluous. After all, the federal government is already required to withhold funds from jurisdictions that disobey conditions specifically imposed by Congress. Still, it is better that the order be redundant than that it mount an assault on federalism and separation of powers.

If Trump does not withdraw this order or adopt a narrow interpretation of it, sanctuary cities should fight him in court. And all who care about constitutional federalism and separation of powers should support them.

What Chance Do Sanctuary Cities Have Against Trump's Executive Order?

By Amanda Hoover

Christian Science Monitor, January 26, 2017

January 26, 2017 —As President Trump signed an executive order that attempts to coerce sanctuary cities into shifting their immigrant-friendly stances, leaders across the nation spoke out against the action, calling it unconstitutional and vowing to protect their diverse communities.

Mr. Trump signed the order Wednesday, along with another that called for the construction of his promised border wall between the United States and Mexico. The sanctuary city order calls for cuts in federal funding for cities that fail to report undocumented immigrants accused of nonviolent crimes to federal authorities seeking to deport them.

The pair of actions could drastically shift US immigration policy, and have led to outcry from elected officials who have worked to defend the 11 million people living illegally in the United States. Despite Trump's strong rhetoric on the campaign trail and immediate actions taken during his first week in office, leaders around the nation say they are prepared to protect the immigrants residing within the limits of some 200 sanctuary cities.

And legal experts have said the order, which threatens to withhold undisclosed amounts of federal funds, may embody an overstep of presidential authority and violate the Constitution.

"There is a huge question to the legality of Trump's threats. I don't think Trump unilaterally has the ability to strip

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federal funding," Paromita Shah, associate director at the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild, tells The Christian Science Monitor, noting that the president could intend to use the so-far loosely defined order to put pressure on localities that oppose the key tenets of his campaign.

"It's not clear, as always, if Trump is posturing by deliberately issuing vague commands for cities to do what he wants," she adds.

While the term "sanctuary city" has come into wide use, it doesn't have a legal definition. Generally, the communities classify themselves as such by refusing to hold undocumented immigrants who commit nonviolent crimes until federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents can take them into custody.

In cities and towns across the country, the scenarios arise when police arrest someone and charge him or her, taking fingerprints and sending the prints to the FBI and ICE. If federal agents decide to deport the person, officers typically continue to hold him or her for an additional 48 hours and wait for immigration officials to take the defendant into custody, even if the accused has paid bail on a nonviolent charge.

But in sanctuary cities, officers cannot hold defendants after judges order their release on bail. The policy stems from an argument that detaining people for civil immigration violations after they're to be released is a violation of the Constitution. Some sanctuary cities bar their law enforcement officials from questioning residents in an attempt to determine their immigration status.

Advocates of the programs argue that they make cities safer by giving undocumented immigrants amnesty as they come forward to report crimes, allowing bridges to be built between minority communities and law enforcement. Others say that shielding immigrants from deportation allows them to apply for business licenses and legally operate small economic ventures that boost the economy. But opponents say the measures keep dangerous criminals in the United States, putting citizens at risk and undermining federal immigration laws.

Trump's actions are short on specifics, but he again reiterated the idea that the executive order is intended to tackle issues with violent and dangerous undocumented criminals. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said the order would tackle cities classified as sanctuaries under the Department of Homeland Security regulations and render them ineligible for federal grants.

"They shouldn't be very worried," Trump said of the immigrants, such as those who classify as "dreamers" protected by former President Barack Obama, in an ABC News interview broadcast on Wednesday night. "Where you have great people that are here that have done a good job, they should be far less worried. We'll be coming out with policy on that over the next period of four weeks."

But leaders around the country took the executive order as a call to action, and they may have solid legal backing to maintain their statuses. Cities use federal funding for vital community functions, covering initiatives such as drug and HIV testing, job training, and assisting the elderly community. In December, Mother Jones reported that a slew of cities already indicating their will to resist anti-immigration action could stand to lose as much as 25 percent of their city or police department budgets.

Still, the threat of those losses hasn't caused leaders to reconsider their stances. Democratic Boston Mayor Marty Walsh called the executive action "the most destructive and un-American threat on America," and offered up Boston City Hall as a safe haven for the city's undocumented residents.

"If people want to live here, they'll live here," he said at a press conference Wednesday. "They can use my office. They can use any office in this building."

Others have said they would rely on legal action to fight the directive, which could serve to contradict its anti-terror and crime-fighting goals.

"We think it's very susceptible to legal challenge," New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) told CNN. "If they make an attempt to pull that money, it will be from NYPD, from security funding to fight terrorism. If an attempt is made to do that, we will go to court immediately for an injunction to stop it."

In California, mayors of San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland, and the state legislature have joined together to form a united front against the policy changes.

Trump's directives could clash with the 10th Amendment, which gives states the rights to create their own legislation in conjunction with federal laws and regulations. It also must stand up to the 1987 Supreme Court ruling South Dakota v. Dole, in which the court found that funding can be withheld only for the specific initiative in question. Experts speculate that Congress, which would have more authority than the president to block funding, will likely be unable to deny grants to a range of programs across cities.

Sanctuary city policies "have been carefully crafted with federal laws in mind," Grisel Ruiz, a staff attorney with the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, tells the Monitor. "They can definitely stand a legal challenge in court."

While aggressive immigration policies have long created a chasm between the ICE and local law enforcement and governments, Trump's use of an executive order and threats to curtail funding represents a bolder push on part of the federal government, Ms. Ruiz adds.

"In terms of someone being this aggressive and going this far out, Trump is really setting a new standard for how aggressive he's being in trying to coerce cities," she says.

As the specifics of the laws – and their legal viability – continue to be debated, sweeping action on the part of local

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leaders would likely be premature. Some cities, such as Los Angeles, have set up funds to provide legal services for immigrants, and others have evaluated their local police departments and developed new ways to increase their presence in historically isolated, minority communities. Both of those tactics can serve to protect undocumented immigrants.

For now, voicing their opposition to the action and reaffirming their commitment to protecting undocumented immigrants in their cities as valuable community members is a strong step for elected officials to take, Ms. Shah says.

"They wouldn't have passed these policies if they weren't on firm [legal] footing," she says. "I don't see anything here that they're required to change anything that they're doing. Everything they've been doing has been within the confines of the law."

Despite Calls To Defund Sanctuary Cities, A Steady Drumbeat Of Judicial Decisions Defends Them

By Christopher Lasch

The Hill, January 26, 2017

President Trump's recent executive order, "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States," promises an era of unprecedented cruelty and, like President Trump's other plans on immigration, is dissociated from factual and legal reality.

President Trump was elected in part because of his anti-immigrant policies. Making "sanctuary" a dirty word was part and parcel of that platform, as was the strategy he pursues today—invoking "public safety" as the justification for increased interior enforcement and attacks on sanctuary jurisdictions. But studies have conclusively rejected the factual grounding for his anti-sanctuary stance—the identification of immigrants with criminality—as a myth.

On the legal side, a line of unbroken judicial decisions from 2014 straight through to 2017 affirms the soundness of sanctuary policies distancing local law enforcement from federal immigration enforcement.

Although there were just a few dozen sanctuary cities as recently as 2010, by some estimates there are now over 500 "sanctuary" jurisdictions scattered across the United States. This includes two states (California and Connecticut) that have statutory limits on cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.

What caused this tidal wave of sanctuary policies? While different jurisdictions have pursued different local policies (including the creation of diverse, inclusive communities; the elimination of racial and ethnic discrimination; and flat-out resistance to federal immigration policies that have been described as inhumane), there is no doubt that the most prevalent reason for the wave of sanctuary policies adopted since 2014 has been a legal one.

The Fourth Amendment prohibits warrantless arrests except those based on probable cause. And a series of judicial decisions (from federal courts in Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Oregon) from early 2014 cast doubt on the practice of using federally issued immigration "detainers" to continue imprisoning in local jails noncitizens who would otherwise be entitled to release.

These decisions acquired sufficient force that the Obama administration was forced to scrap the centerpiece of its interior immigration enforcement program. Far from being "popular and successful," Secure Communities was wildly unpopular and legally doomed. On Nov. 20, 2014, pointing to "the increasing number of federal court decisions that hold that detainer-based detention by state and local law enforcement agencies violates the Fourth Amendment," then Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson declared an end to the program.

Many of the "sanctuary" policies that President Trump and the Republicans have in their sights for funding cuts are nothing more than policies limiting the use of detainers. Put more simply, they are policies for obeying the Fourth Amendment. Just in this month, a state court in New York, and federal courts in Minnesota, Texas, and Rhode Island (where the court cautioned, "that a United States citizen was held in prison on an erroneous immigration detainer without probable cause for even one night should concern all Americans") have added to the drumbeat of decisions establishing this basic legal fact.

A fifth decision, from a federal court in California, dealt several important blows to Trump's plans. In July 2015, the shooting death of Kathryn Steinle by an undocumented man who had been deported five times previously reignited the sanctuary city debate. The case became the cornerstone of candidate Trump's immigration policy, and particularly his attack on sanctuary cities—he repeatedly invoked the case, using racially coded language, to exaggerate the threat presented by immigrants. He mentioned Ms. Steinle when he accepted the Republican nomination, and when he outlined his immigration platform.

On Jan. 6, though, a federal court dismissed a lawsuit brought against San Francisco city officials, which had essentially alleged that San Francisco's sanctuary policy caused Ms. Steinle's death. The court concluded there was no legal theory by which city officials could be held liable. Additionally, the decision provides legal support for one common type of sanctuary policy—the refusal to provide federal immigration officials with information concerning a state or local prisoner's upcoming release date. Considering a law which has been regularly invoked to claim that sanctuary policies "flout federal law," the court held that "no

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plausible reading of [the law] encompasses the release date of an undocumented inmate."

The message of these decisions is clear. If the self-proclaimed "law-and-order candidate" is going to follow the law as president, he would do well to abandon his attack on sanctuary cities.

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The views expressed by authors are their own and not the views of The Hill.

In Fact, Sanctuary Cities Have Less Poverty And Crime

Atlantic's CityLab, January 26, 2017

New research contradicts President Trump's claim that these areas do "immeasurable harm" to their residents.

On Wednesday, President Donald Trump announced two executive orders to jumpstart his immigration agenda. In one of them, he asked "sanctuary cities"—jurisdictions that legally limit their local police from collaborating with federal immigration authorities—to stop doing so, or else, lose federal funds. Per the order:

Sanctuary jurisdictions across the United States willfully violate Federal law in an attempt to shield aliens from removal from the United States. These jurisdictions have caused immeasurable harm to the American people and to the very fabric of our Republic.

The harm the order refers to is a decline in public safety. But that decline doesn't appear to exist. To the contrary: Sanctuary cities show lower crime and higher economic well-being, a new analysis published by the Center for American Progress and the National Immigration Law Center shows.

In the report, Tom K. Wong, an associate professor of political science at the University of California, San Diego, analyzed a sample of 2,492 counties from an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) dataset. In this sample, 602 were identified by ICE as "sanctuary" counties, where local law enforcement didn't accept "detainers"—requests from ICE to hold suspected undocumented individuals in custody for extra time. Wong compared the crime rates and economic conditions in these counties with the ones that did comply with ICE, controlling for population and demographic characteristics.

He found 35.5 fewer violent and property crimes per 10,000 people in sanctuary counties versus non-sanctuary ones—"a result that is highly statistically significant." Counties in large metros reported an even more dramatically difference, with 65.4 fewer crimes per 10,000 people.

Sanctuary counties also registered better economic conditions. On average, they had higher median incomes (by about $4,353), lower poverty (by 2.3 percent), and slightly lower unemployment rates (1.1 percent). These positive effects were exaggerated in the small counties, where the contributions of each individual immigrant were likely to have a larger impact.

Wong concludes:

The data support arguments made by law enforcement executives that communities are safer when law enforcement agencies do not become entangled in federal immigration enforcement efforts. The data also make clear that, when counties protect all of their residents, they see significant economic gains. By keeping out of federal immigration enforcement, sanctuary counties are keeping families together—and when households remain intact and individuals can continue contributing, this strengthens local economies.

Wong's analysis is not the first to contradict this administration's narrative on sanctuary cities. A previous study examined crime rates over time in these areas. Some, like San Francisco, experienced a rise in crime after the fact; others, like Baltimore, saw the opposite effect. On average, the researchers observed no "statistically significant effect" on crime after these cities enacted sanctuary-type policies.

There are mayors on both sides of the political aisle who argue that conflating policing with immigration enforcement leads to a breakdown in the community trust—a claim that research has backed up. They argue that "sanctuary cities" do cooperate with authorities, just in a way that doesn't jeopardize the relationship local police have with immigrant populations. Wong's findings support their case: Cities where immigrant communities trust authorities to report crime are safer and more productive.

Sheriff Who Texas Governor Wants Out Slams Immigrant 'fear'

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) – A Texas sheriff under fire from Republican Gov. Greg Abbott over so-called "sanctuary cities" policies says streets are safer when people can report crimes "without fear of deportation."

Travis County Sheriff Sally Hernandez on Thursday fired back for the first time since the governor vowed this week to cut off some state funding and change laws to remove her from office.

The conflict started after Hernandez, an elected Democrat, said she would no longer comply with all federal immigration detainers in Austin jails.

She pointedly made the announcement hours after President Donald Trump was sworn into office. Trump this week moved to cut off money to local governments that don't fully cooperate with federal immigration officials.

Hernandez says she won't let "fear and misinformation" dictate her job.

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Gov. Greg Abbott Hunting For More Funds To Cut From Travis County In Sanctuary City Battle

By Brandi Grissom

Dallas Morning News, January 26, 2017

AUSTIN – Gov. Greg Abbott is on the hunt for more funding to cut from Travis County after the sheriff there refused to reverse a policy the governor says makes the Austin area a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants.

Steven Albright, Abbott's budget director, on Thursday sent a letter to the heads of all state agencies asking them to identify all funds, including federal dollars, that had been allotted to Travis County in the 2016 fiscal year.

The letter comes amid an ongoing skirmish between Abbott and Travis County Sheriff Sally Hernandez. Last Friday, Hernandez announced that she would no longer turn certain undocumented immigrants in her jail over to federal immigration officials. The decision incensed Abbott, who has made banning sanctuary cities a priority for the current legislative session.

Abbott spokesman John Wittman declined to comment on the letter Thursday evening.

Abbott sent Hernandez a letter on Monday threatening to take away $1.8 million in law enforcement grants from her department if the sheriff did not reverse her "reckless" policy by Feb. 1. On Wednesday, he said during a FOX News interview that Hernandez ought to be ousted from her elected office, and he called on lawmakers to pass legislation that would punish local officials who promote sanctuary policies.

Abbott and others who decry so-called sanctuary policies say they worry the practice could leave criminals who are in the country illegally free to roam the streets and victimize others.

While GOP state senators sent Hernandez a letter also lambasting her decision, Democrats from Austin came to her defense with a blistering letter to Abbott, calling his threats an overreach.

"Threatening Sheriff Hernandez with removal from office and withholding much-needed funding from the county is a vast overreach of executive authority," Reps. Eddie Rodriguez, Donna Howard, Celia Israel and Gina Hinojosa wrote.

On Thursday, Hernandez issued a public statement saying she would not back away from her policy on immigrants in the local jail. She said her directive does not violate any state or federal laws and makes the community safer.

"I respect the job of our state leaders, but I will not allow fear and misinformation to be my guiding principles as a leader sworn to protect this community," she said.

The letter from Abbott's budget director seeks not only to identify state funds but also seeks out federal funds that go to the county. It's a signal that more cuts could come not only from Abbott's pen but from the executive order that President Trump signed Wednesday that would cut money to sanctuary cities.

Sanctuary Cities See Legal Holes In Trump's Immigration Orders

By Mica Rosenberg, Dan Levine And Andy Sullivan

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump Could Revive Missouri Proposal On Deported Immigrants

By Summer Ballentine

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) – As President Donald Trump rolls out plans to build a wall on the Mexican border and considers blocking refugees, Missouri lawmakers are trying again to pass a bill aimed at cracking down on deported immigrants who come back and commit crimes.

Under the proposal pitched Thursday by Republican Sen. Mike Cunningham, immigrants who are deported but come back and commit any assault or felony offense would face up to 10 years in prison for "illegal re-entry." The bill directs those inmates to be transferred to federal immigration authorities as soon as possible.

The proposal died in the House after passing the Senate when it was introduced last year, but Trump's election could add momentum to such efforts in Missouri and elsewhere.

"It makes it easier for things like this to pass because already the hatred has been brought to the surface," said Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates Executive Director Aimee Abizera, who fled the genocide in her home country of Rwanda. "People feel like they have a right to do it."

Missouri appears to be the first and only state to consider such a proposal, said Nick Bullock, spokesman for the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Earlier this week, a bill moved forward in Florida's Senate that seeks to increase sentences for crimes committed by immigrants living in the country illegally. It proposes that immigrants who commit felonies and misdemeanors face charges that are a degree higher so the sentences are harsher.

An immigrant rights group said that it wasn't a coincidence the bill was approved by the committee the same week the Trump administration announced new actions on immigration.

In blue states, Trump's policies have led to pushback. A New York legislator wants to block the state from signing contracts or investing in companies hired to build a border wall, and state and local officials in California have blasted a Trump policy targeting immigrant-protecting sanctuary cities.

Cunningham proposed the Missouri bill last year amid frustration among some lawmakers over former Democratic President Barack Obama's handling of immigration issues. In arguing for the bill, Cunningham has cited Pablo Antonio Serrano-Vitorino, a Mexican national charged last year with the high profile fatal shootings of five men in Missouri and Kansas. Cunningham called Serrano-Vitorino the "scum of the Earth."

"We've had some egregious crimes committed by these people," Republican Sen. Brian Munzlinger said Thursday. "Hopefully the feds will step up so we won't ever have to use this law. But until they do, it gives us another alternative."

Efforts on the state level to crack down on immigrants living in the country illegally have previously run into court challenges.

The U.S. Supreme Court in 2012 struck down key provisions of Arizona's crackdown on immigrants but did not throw out the state provision requiring police to check the immigration status of someone they suspect is in the United States without documentation. The court prohibited police officers from arresting people on minor immigration charges.

Opponents to the Missouri bill on Thursday also raised constitutional questions about the role of the state in immigration enforcement. ACLU of Missouri lobbyist Sara Baker told a panel of senators during the hearing that if the bill is challenged, it "almost surely" would be struck down.

Abizera and others also raised concerns that the measure could be used more broadly against immigrants who don't commit violent crimes.

"It's already considered to be criminal when you enter here without status," Abizera said. "And so when (Cunningham) says we're going after criminals, practically we're going after immigrants."

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In These Six American Towns, Laws Targeting 'the Illegals' Didn't Go As Planned

By Chico Harlan

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

HAZLETON, Pa. — Starting a decade ago, a group of small U.S. cities began passing laws to block undocumented immigrants from living within their borders.

They were a collection of mostly white exurbs and faded manufacturing towns whose populations suddenly were transforming. More Latinos were arriving in search of jobs, and the towns' leaders complained of burdened schools and higher crime.

Here in this northeastern Pennsylvania city, then-Mayor Lou Barletta said he would do what he could to restore "law and order" and take back his city. It was time, Barletta said, for a "war on the illegals."

And while that sentiment is shared among some advisers to President Trump, the experiences of these towns show how measures targeting undocumented immigrants can leave lasting and bitter racial divisions while doing little to address the underlying forces that often determine where newcomers settle.

The laws in most cases aimed to make it illegal for landlords to rent to undocumented immigrants and threatened fines for employers who hired them. But among the six most high-profile towns that tried to pass such laws, all have been foiled by court rulings, settlements or challenges with enforcement. Several have been ordered to pay the legal fees for the civil rights groups that brought suits. And in five of the six towns, the Latino population — legal or illegal — has continued to grow, attracted by a continued rise in low-paying jobs.

"It wound up costing our city $9 million in attorney's fees," said Bob Phelps, the mayor of Farmers Branch, Tex., a Dallas suburb that saw its ordinance defeated in court after a seven-year legal battle. "And we accomplished zero."

The local efforts were championed by two men who are now Trump advisers and reportedly were considered for Cabinet positions. Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, who counseled most of the cities in their legal challenges, consulted with Trump during his campaign about issues including a border wall with Mexico. Barletta is now a U.S. House member and was part of Trump's transition team.

Trump on Wednesday rolled out the first phase of what is expected to be sweeping immigration policy changes, signing orders for the construction of a border wall and the targeting of "sanctuary cities" that resist the deportation of undocumented immigrants. His administration is also considering tighter restrictions on refugees from several Muslim-majority countries. Trump has more latitude to carry out immigration policy changes than states or cities do, but his policies could face legal challenges — or bring about unintended economic consequences.

"These ideas are more easy to sell as political talking points than as real policy options," said Muzaffar Chishti, the director of the Migration Policy Institute at the New York

University School of Law. “Just because you say you want to do something doesn’t mean you’ll be able to.”

Difficulties with enforcement

The towns that took action — Hazleton; Farmers Branch; Valley Park, Mo.; Riverside, N.J.; Escondido, Calif.; and Fremont, Neb. — did so largely out of frustration, fed up with swift demographic changes and what they saw as the rising costs of caring for undocumented residents. The newcomers were drawn by cheaper housing costs and new industries that attracted low-wage labor.

“The presence of illegal aliens places a fiscal burden on the city,” Fremont’s ordinance read.

At the same time, the federal government’s inability to seal the border was helping to drive an argument that towns and states had the legal right to do a job that Washington could not manage. Kobach, a longtime activist who worked at the time for the legal arm of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, sought to use those towns as a testing ground for his aggressive stance. Most of the laws were passed in a flurry between 2006 and 2007.

Although immigration enforcement had long been the purview of the federal government, finding those who had crossed the border illegally or overstayed visas was not doable without the help of local law enforcement, said Rosemary Jenks, the director of government relations at NumbersUSA, which favors a reduction in immigration.

“You should help states and localities do what they want to do voluntarily in order to help the enforcement of immigration law,” Jenks said.

But localities have not gotten the chance. In Hazleton and Farmers Branch, federal judges ruled the ordinances discriminatory and unconstitutional. In Escondido, the town quickly backed away after a challenge by the American Civil Liberties Union. In Valley Park, the town’s mayor decided to no longer enforce what his predecessor had put in place. In Riverside, as legal bills piled up, the city council rescinded the ordinance, fearing damage to businesses. Dozens of other towns considering “Illegal Immigration Relief Act” laws backed off.

The municipality that has come the closest to successfully implementing such a law is Fremont, a meatpacking town west of Omaha where a six-year court fight, financed through a tax increase, won the city the right to ban undocumented immigrants from rental housing. But just as the city’s officials put the law in place in 2014, they realized it would not be effective: Fremont’s rental applications, with their wording approved by the courts, did not require the information, such as a Social Security number, that could help determine whether a person was in the United States legally.

Courts also have weakened several states’ illegal-immigrant laws, most notably in Arizona. Michael Hethmon, who is senior counsel for the Immigration Reform Law Institute and helped Kobach handle the Hazleton case, said that the local efforts have faced more setbacks than victories but that the towns’ money has been “well spent” in taking a stance. The towns had no data on the number of undocumented residents before or after the ordinances, making it difficult to measure how well the laws worked in driving away that part of the population.

“If you compare our advocacy struggle to other issues — civil rights issues or LGBT — you have to remember that those folks lost a lot more [at the beginning] before they ultimately prevailed,” Hethmon said.

The battles over the local ordinances, residents of those towns say, helped create fault lines that remain visible. Escondido in 2014 rejected a permit for a shelter that would have housed unaccompanied minors who had come across the southwest U.S. border; a new ACLU lawsuit alleges that the rejection was driven by anti-immigrant sentiment. In Fremont, the town has been split by a proposed new Costco poultry processing plant — one that would add hundreds of jobs but probably would accelerate the arrival of immigrants.

“The makeup of our town has really changed, and again with this chicken plant, there’s going to be a majority of low-income jobs that will not bring us taxpayers and homeowners,” said Dawn Wiegert, 55, who has lived in Fremont for 25 years. “People that will be a burden on all of our other resources — I don’t know how else to say it without sounding racist.”

In Hazleton, the first place to propose an illegal-immigrant law, some of the tensions have worsened with the proliferation of social media, said Joleen Reis, 24, a Hazleton day-care worker who is one of the few who straddle the white and Latino communities. Her father came to Pennsylvania from Peru as a migrant worker and met her mother, who is white.

Reis pulled up a local-news page on Facebook. The latest item mentioned a police report — two men in dark clothing stealing from vehicles.

“So are you ready for America without illegals?” one commenter said. “Because I am!”

“Filthy animals!” another said. “Send them back somewhere now!”

Reis sighed.

“I try not to read this stuff, typically,” Reis said. “But they assume everyone is illegal. And it’s always ‘us’ versus ‘them.’ “

Blamed for town’s woes

Tucked under the crisscross of highways near the Pocono Mountains, Hazleton had endured the slow-motion decay common in blue-collar manufacturing and mining towns, only this time there was a twist: A newer set of state tax breaks helped lure a blitz of distribution centers, as well as a Cargill slaughterhouse, to the outskirts of town. The Latino population, at 4 percent in 2000, had soared to 38

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percent by 2006, with many Dominicans moving from the Bronx and Brooklyn in search of jobs and cheaper housing. Barletta said he was concerned about higher crime rates, and when a 29-year-old was killed, allegedly by undocumented immigrants, he decided to act.

He searched on his computer about get-tough laws on immigration, finding an ordinance, debated but never passed, written by the city council in San Bernardino, Calif. Barletta copied the text almost verbatim. Hazleton's ordinance would make it illegal for businesses to hire undocumented immigrants and called for fines for landlords who rented to them.

Several months later, Hazleton had a new law and CNN trucks outside its city hall.

Barletta emphasized that he opposed only those in the United States illegally and was driven to act by several obvious problems: The population was booming, but the tax base wasn't — a sign, he said, of undocumented immigrants not contributing to the system. Schools were spending more money to educate Spanish-speaking students. Hazleton's woefully understaffed police force — short by about 30 officers — was struggling to deal with an uptick in violent crime.

"I saw how it affected the lives of people, our emergency rooms, our schools," Barletta said in an interview. "A mayor had to take the stand. Listen, it wasn't fun — trust me. When my dog barked in the middle of the night, I had a shotgun under my bed."

The law easily won the city council's approval, but its enforcement was held up by an injunction and a lawsuit brought by civil rights groups, including the ACLU. In court, some of Barletta's arguments for the law ran into trouble: He said he didn't know how many undocumented immigrants lived in Hazleton or how many had committed crimes. The town hadn't studied it.

A federal judge eventually ruled that the law was illegal because it usurped the federal government's power and would affect not just undocumented immigrants but "those who look or act as if they are foreign." Other courts upheld that ruling over eight years. Kobach, paid $250,000 by Hazleton, did not respond to multiple requests seeking comment.

In 2015, a federal judge ordered Hazleton to pay $1.4 million to the lawyers who had fought the town.

The city, with a budget of $9 million, took out a bank loan and cut a check to the ACLU, said Joseph Yannuzzi, the mayor who succeeded Barletta.

"With that money," Yannuzzi said, "we could have hired 12 police officers."

'No choice about the changes'

Latinos now constitute 50 percent of Hazleton's population. They've opened up carnicerias and beauty salons and boutiques along once-decrepit Wyoming Street. They tend to be younger and much likelier to work than Hazleton's white residents, according to census data, and now make up much of the labor force at the airport-size distribution centers of American Eagle and Amazon.com (whose chief executive, Jeffrey P. Bezos, owns The Washington Post). Hazleton native Joe Maddon, the manager of the Chicago Cubs, several years ago opened up a community center aimed at building closer relationships between whites and Hispanics.

"To be honest, residents who were here before don't have no choice about the changes," said Eric Garcia, 37, a Dominican who moved to Hazleton from New York in 2005 and owns a photo studio.

But many longtime residents, unnerved by the influx of foreigners, have left the city limits for what they call the "valley" suburbs. With an immigration message similar to Barletta's, Trump won nearly 60 percent of the votes in Hazleton's Luzerne County.

Jamie Longazel, a Hazleton native and University of Dayton sociologist who in 2016 published a book about his home town, "Undocumented Fears," said that Barletta, with his ordinance, introduced a "villain" that people barely talked about beforehand. Longazel found in his research that only 0.7 percent of crimes in Hazleton between 2001 and 2006 had been committed by undocumented immigrants.

"I don't want to made it sound like Hazleton is only full of backwards racists," said Longazel, who conducted focus groups and interviews with longtime white residents. "I want to emphasize this point that a lot of the scapegoating we see is top-down. Politicians are speaking this language and then we tend to echo it, rather than there being malicious intent from the bottom."

House GOP Warns D.C. Mayor Not To Use Tax Money Defending Illegal Immigrants

By Aaron C. Davis

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

House Republicans with oversight of the nation's capital are taking aim at D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's plan to use taxpayer money to defend illegal immigrants from deportation.

The D.C. mayor received a letter Wednesday from Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Idaho), chairman of the House Oversight Committee, and Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), head of the subcommittee for District affairs, warning Bowser that her plan appears to violate federal law and that the committees are investigating.

Bowser this month joined leaders from Chicago, Los Angeles and New York in announcing that the District would set up a legal-defense fund to represent illegal immigrants targeted for deportation under policies of President Trump.

The fund, Bowser said, would "double down" on the District's status as a "sanctuary city." D.C. police are already

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instructed not to ask about immigration status, and city corrections officials provide only limited help in identifying nonviolent criminals to federal agents for deportation.

Bowser said the $500,000 fund would take the city beyond being just a sanctuary, providing initial funds for the District to defend its estimated 25,000 illegal immigrants. The efforts, she said, would include hiring attorneys to conduct seminars for illegal immigrants to know their rights with federal agents and to represent city residents in deportation proceedings and in applying for asylum.

The District's complicated financial relationship with the federal government, however, means D.C. may have less latitude than cities in the 50 states to carry out the plan.

Because D.C. is a federal territory, local lawmakers cannot spend any of the city's local tax revenue — which tops $7 billion annually — in ways that conflict with federal spending rules. And a decades-old federal law known as the Immigration and Nationality Act says no taxpayer money can be used to assist illegal immigrants in fighting deportation.

Chaffetz and Meadows cited the law in their letter and ordered Bowser's office to turn over all documents related to the planned fund, including any internal legal documents drafted to defend the mayor's proposal, as well as a list of outside organizations that could receive grant money from the fund.

"The District's planned use of funds … to pay for legal representation of individuals subject to removal proceedings appears to be in conflict with existing federal law," wrote Chaffetz and Meadows.

A spokeswoman for their committees declined to comment.

Bowser said the congressional investigation highlighted anew the District's need for statehood and the "special" burden D.C. residents face. "These are the types of questions we will be called to answer," she said.

The letter from Chaffetz and Meadows arrived as Trump was at the Department of Homeland Security, announcing an executive order to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and to ramp up deportations of illegal immigrants already in the country.

Trump's order instructed his administration to identify federal funds that could be withheld from D.C. and other cities if they maintained sanctuary policies.

D.C. budget officials quickly said the order could wreak havoc on the city, potentially calling into question billions in annual funding assistance.

But as mayors across the country weighed in with defiant statements, Bowser's office remained quiet for more than three hours.

Bowser later said the city would remain a sanctuary city, but added that the letter from Chaffetz demanding that the city produce documents had complicated the city's response to Trump. Aides to the mayor said she had held a lengthy conference call with Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District's nonvoting representative to Congress, to plot a response.

It is not the first time that Chaffetz has tussled with Bowser.

Two years ago, the oversight chairman raised the prospect of the mayor facing jail time for violating federal drug laws if she proceeded with carrying out a ballot measure legalizing marijuana in D.C.

Bowser allowed a partial legalization, letting residents carry and consume marijuana. But she did not press a bigger showdown with Chaffetz to tax and regulate it, as Colorado and other states have where voters passed similar measures.

The District has been left with one of the nation's most tortured marijuana policies, where possession is legal, but sales and purchases remain illegal.

Chaffetz dropped the matter amid warnings by then-President Barack Obama that the White House supported the District's rights to set its own drug laws.

With a Republican in the White House, it is unclear how far House Republicans may now go in asserting control over the District.

This week, the House passed a bill that would permanently ban the District from spending its own tax money to subsidize abortions for low-income women. The White House issued a statement that it would sign the bill.

Similar efforts to roll back D.C. gun laws have also been introduced in the House.

Campuses Wary Of Offering 'Sanctuary' To Undocumented Students

By Julia Preston

New York Times, January 26, 2017

Janet Napolitano, president of the University of California, knows exactly what's at stake if President Trump shuts down an Obama administration program that has given work permits and protection from deportation to some 752,000 young undocumented immigrants. In 2012, in her previous job as secretary of Homeland Security, she signed the document — nothing more than a policy memo — that created the program.

So when alarm spread among immigrants on college campuses following Mr. Trump's election, Ms. Napolitano moved quickly to determine what the California system could do to shelter its students if he carried through on his pledges to cancel the program, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The university estimates that almost 3,800 among its 190,000 students are undocumented, many but not all with DACA.

Ms. Napolitano, retaining her law enforcement instincts, does not mention the word "sanctuary" when describing what the university could offer. "Sanctuary is such a vague term, we don't use it," she said crisply.

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Instead, the university has published detailed principles of support for undocumented students, including assurances that campus police would not question students solely about their immigration status or join any cooperation agreements with federal immigration authorities under the Trump administration. Through the Davis campus law school, the university is organizing legal help for students detained for deportation.

Another worrisome prospect, Ms. Napolitano said, is that students could lose the permits that allow them to work. Undocumented students, including any losing DACA, will continue to pay in-state tuition and be eligible for state financial aid and for a revolving loan program funded, in part, by the university.

"We want to do everything we can so students are safe on our campuses," Ms. Napolitano said, "so they can focus on what they are there to do, which is to study."

Students at dozens of college campuses, galvanized by Mr. Trump's depictions of immigrants as criminals or potential terrorists, have pressed administrators to provide sanctuary for those without legal papers. But universities have had differing ideas about what that would mean in practice, and most leaders have been careful to say they would not defy the law.

Some institutions have flatly rejected sanctuary plans as encouraging lawbreaking. At New Mexico State University, the president, Garrey Carruthers, said that banning federal agents from campus might imperil its federal funding.

One of the first presidents to declare a sanctuary campus explicitly was Michael S. Roth of Wesleyan, who announced in November that it "will not voluntarily assist" any efforts by federal authorities to deport students. Soon after, John Coatsworth, the provost of Columbia University, said that it would not allow immigration agents on campus without a warrant.

Some administrators point out that student information, including their immigration status, is already protected under long-existing privacy laws requiring the authorities to show a warrant or court order before any data can be released without students' consent.

In Georgia, Emory, which is a private university, considered but ultimately decided against protective measures. "Emory is not seeking to establish itself as a sanctuary campus, for which there is no legal definition," the university said in a Jan. 4 statement. Taking a tougher line, the University of Georgia said that any call for sanctuary was "unacceptable" and added, "We expect our institutions to follow the law."

In his first formal briefing, on Jan. 23, Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary, suggested that canceling DACA would not be a priority for the new administration, but he did not provide any explicit reassurance that the program would continue.

Ms. Napolitano is still contemplating the bitter possibility that Mr. Trump will sweep away her most significant immigration accomplishment. She hopes to persuade him that the program is a good use of executive power, emphasizing that DACA immigrants pose little security risk because they pass background checks to get into the program.

Her message for Mr. Trump: "Why waste resources trying to deport good students who've done everything right?"

Even Before Trump Acts On Immigration, New Yorkers Protest

By Liz Robbins

New York Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump had yet to act on plans to stem the flow of refugees and Muslims into the United States, but the nearly 1,000 New Yorkers gathered in Washington Square Park on Wednesday evening wasted no time in protesting whatever was next.

Earlier, Mr. Trump had issued executive orders to build a wall on the border between the United States and Mexico and to withhold federal money from so-called sanctuary cities, which do not cooperate with federal immigration officials in detaining undocumented immigrants who have been arrested on charges unrelated to their immigration status. The crowd made its displeasure on all fronts known: "No ban, no wall," the protesters cried. And then they engaged in a call and response with an Arabic greeting: "Peace be unto you. And unto you, peace."

The instant opposition extended to New York's City Hall and the chambers of the State Assembly in Albany.

Assemblyman Francisco P. Moya, a Democrat of Queens, proposed a bill Wednesday night that would limit the state's cooperation with the police in assisting immigration officers who did not have a judge's warrant to detain immigrants accused of a crime.

Among its many provisions, Mr. Trump's order called for state and local law enforcement agencies to "perform the functions of an immigration officer" in detaining and potentially deporting undocumented immigrants. Mr. Moya's bill, which had the backing of other Assembly members, would prohibit law enforcement agents from stopping, questioning, investigating or arresting an individual on the basis of a suspected immigration violation. "No state or local law enforcement agency, or agent thereof, shall perform the function of or be cross-designated as a federal immigration officer," the bill states.

A draft of Mr. Trump's next order, which remained unsigned on Thursday, included an indefinite ban on Syrian refugees and a temporary ban on immigrants coming from Muslim countries with known terrorist ties.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, the country's largest Muslim civil liberties organization, sponsored the protest on Wednesday.

"Muslim-Americans have been attacked over and over again," said Afaf Nasher, executive director of CAIR New York. "But we are resilient and strong, and we will come back with more protests, until we have our civil rights. Because this is what America is supposed to be."

Elected officials and immigrant advocates said Mr. Trump's actions would make it harder for law enforcement to maintain public safety.

Mohammad Razvi, the founder and director of the Council of Peoples Organization, a group that serves Muslims, Arabs and South Asians, helped to found a Muslim advisory board to the F.B.I. He works with the New York Police Department, and since the Sept. 11 attacks, he has encouraged his community to report crimes and to not fear the police.

"These orders are really putting a gray cloud over the hard work in building these relationships and encouraging the community to be part of mainstream America," Mr. Razvi said on Thursday.

"What this administration is emphasizing is dividing the country," he added. "Our fellow Americans are going to view these Muslims as the enemy, when this is not the case."

Mr. Razvi's bustling storefront office, which offers English classes all day, legal counseling and youth programs, sits next to a mosque in Midwood. He said that on Wednesday he was continuously stopped by concerned citizens wondering what would happen to them. Some, he said, worried that family members coming from certain countries would be denied visas. And he said neighborhood business owners reported fewer people shopping.

"The uncertainty is what's really causing fear," he said.

DREAMers Are The One Immigrant Group Donald Trump Seems Cautious About Going After

By Dara Lind

Vox, January 26, 2017

On the same day that President Donald Trump signed an executive order that would make many, if not most, unauthorized immigrants living in the United States priorities for deportation, he took pains to reassure one group of unauthorized immigrants: unauthorized immigrants who've been protected from deportation by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program created by President Obama.

"We're going to take care of everybody," Trump told ABC News's David Muir on Wednesday. "Where you have great people who are here [and] who have done a good job — they shouldn't be worried."

Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has said similar things in the past, and made the point again Wednesday in an interview with Greta Van Susteren: "They don't have to worry. We're focused on physical security of the border, we're focused on those who are coming to do us harm, from terrorist states and [...] violent criminals."

Ryan's words, though, are empty promises — he and Congress don't control which unauthorized immigrants the government "focuses" on, and the executive order Trump signed on Wednesday explicitly tells border agents to prioritize people who could be charged with "any criminal offense" (which, for unauthorized immigrants, can include working or driving).

That executive order doesn't put DACA recipients at risk yet. But Trump is known to be considering an end to the program. Vox received what appears to be a draft of an executive order that would halt the issuing of new DACA grants and the renewing of existing ones, forcing current DACA recipients to lose their protections one by one over the next two years. Trump is ultimately the person who will determine if DACA recipients have reason to worry or not.

So his comments Wednesday don't mean that he is definitely keeping DACA around. Other comments from Trump himself and members of his administration, and reporting from (among others) Robert Costa of the Washington Post, have all indicated that Trump really is still figuring out what to do with DACA.

His reticence on this issue is striking. As of Wednesday, his executive orders (and one that is expected that will restrict refugees and certain immigrants) already remake whole swaths of US immigration policy. Only when it comes to DACA is he proceeding with any semblance of caution. DACA exists because DREAMers are both politically sympathetic and well-resourced

This is hardly the first time that unauthorized immigrants who came to the US as children have been singled out for sympathetic treatment. Indeed, that's the whole reason DACA exists to begin with.

The DREAM Act, the bill considered by Congress multiple times over the Bush and Obama administrations (and the origin of the term "DREAMers," still used to describe DACA recipients and those who qualify for DACA), was often positioned as a moderate alternative to comprehensive immigration reform with a broad pathway to citizenship for all unauthorized immigrants.

The messaging distinguished DREAMers from their parents. The government didn't have to reward people who chose to come here illegally, the argument went, but it ought to show some compassion for people who'd "been brought" to the US "through no fault of their own," who had grown up in the US and were "Americans in all but name."

DREAMers were considered morally pure and pragmatically desirable. Valedictorians are often trotted out

as representative DREAMers. While actual DACA recipients are likely to be in their 20s and 30s — someone in high school when the DREAM Act was first introduced, in 2001, would be 30 or older now — the stereotypical DREAMer has remained a high school or college student, blameless and bright-futured. They are the quintessential "good immigrant." Mark Abramson/the Washington Post via Getty

To the extent that this messaging isn't used anymore, it's largely because of the efforts of DREAMers themselves, who resist the idea that their parents should be implicitly villainized in order to make them appear more sympathetic themselves. But the fact that DREAMers have had so much power in shaping the message of the immigrant rights movement gets to the other reason they're so politically compelling: They are a well-resourced and well-organized interest group.

Demographically speaking, DREAMers are better positioned to advocate for their interests than other unauthorized immigrants: They're more likely to be fluent in English, they're integrated into their communities, and they're often "out" as unauthorized and in touch with activist networks. That makes them much harder to deport — something the Obama administration found out in some high-profile cases during its first term — and harder to ignore.

Obama's solution to this was DACA, which reinforced both DREAMers' sympathetic nature and their strength. DACA recipients are, generally, making more money now that they can work legally — giving them more resources to fight a deportation case. They are also more likely to be integrated into society now that they're formally protected from deportation. And as cruel as it seems to many Americans to deport people they think of as blameless children, it's arguably crueler to take official government recognition and security away from someone who hasn't done anything to provoke the revocation, and who handed all of her personal information over to the government in order to receive protection. What happens when Trump starts picking on people with constituencies in the United States?

When Vox received, and subsequently published, what appear to be six draft executive orders dealing with immigration, I was struck by the difference between the three that were widely known about at the time (the two that came down yesterday dealing with border and interior enforcement, and the widely rumored order restricting refugees and future immigrants) — and the rest.

The three apparent draft orders that Trump hasn't rushed to sign — the order sunsetting DACA, and two proposals regarding tighter enforcement of work visas and benefits — would all have natural constituencies within the US resisting them. A DACA revocation would get serious pushback from both DREAMers themselves and the politicians in both parties allied with them. The proposals to restrict benefits would affect both legal immigrants currently in the US (who would put themselves at risk of losing their legal status by using benefits like Medicaid) and the US citizen children of unauthorized immigrants (who would no longer qualify their parents for the child tax credit). Meanwhile, changes to work visas would affect not only legal immigrants currently here on those visas but also business interests that align with at least some in the Trump administration.

This week's orders, on the other hand, don't have natural political constituencies. They deal with immigrants who haven't arrived yet, or with "criminal" unauthorized immigrants. (In practice, the label "criminal" is going to be applied to people who wouldn't meet a commonsense definition of the term, but it's hard to make that case in the abstract.) The orders will be extremely aggressive in practice, but politically they're not fights in which the administration faces powerful antagonists.

President Trump and the White House advisers drafting his executive orders may not see much of a distinction between people currently in the US and those not here yet, or between DREAMers and other unauthorized immigrants. But this week's actions — and inactions — suggest they are at least aware that other people do see that distinction. The question is whether the Trump administration's ideology is strong enough that it's willing to pick the hard fights, too. Watch: The racist history of US immigration policy

Needed: Justice For Immigrants Fighting Deportation

By Jojo Annobil

New York Daily News, January 26, 2017

These are uncertain times for immigrants in America, and the urgent need for free and affordable competent counsel in deportation proceedings has never been more critical. The U.S. government continues to aggressively deport tens of thousands of vulnerable, unaccompanied minor children and mothers with children fleeing extreme violence who do not have the benefit of a lawyer.

Moreover, every year, hundreds of U.S. citizens find themselves mistakenly in deportation proceedings. Green card holders who have no memory of living in another country face deportation based on minor crimes oftentimes committed decades ago.

Although the Supreme Court has recognized that deportation — being torn away from one's family and the life a person has built in America — is a severe penalty, there is currently no right to appointed counsel in deportation proceedings, and 63% of all immigrants are forced to represent themselves, with disastrous consequences.

Against this backdrop, the country is bracing for what may be an unprecedented era of enforcement against immigrants. President Trump and his appointees and advisers have talked about deporting millions of immigrants.

Such a drastic enforcement measure will overwhelm the immigration bar, especially legal services providers and pro bono (volunteer) attorneys who represent immigrants in removal proceedings who cannot afford a lawyer.

Courts have often compared immigration law to the tax code as being one of the most complicated areas of federal law. Even experienced volunteer lawyers who are new to immigration law are only able to take on deportation cases after they go through extensive training and receive mentoring from experienced immigration attorneys.

Immigration judges and even attorneys for the Department of Homeland Security have acknowledged that when immigrants have good lawyers, the deportation proceedings move faster and more efficiently. Those who have no claims to relief or waiver of deportation are more likely to accept deportation quickly, and those who do have a basis to remain in the United States can present their case more effectively.

For immigrants who are detained, giving them lawyers can actually save taxpayers money by moving the case faster and reducing the expense of holding immigrants in jails.

The statistics are daunting. In 2015, unaccompanied minor children forced to represent themselves in immigration court nationwide lost 91% of their cases. But when they have competent counsel, they win 84% of their cases. The children who have arrived recently in the United States are fleeing unspeakable violence inflicted by multinational gangs. Without counsel, they realistically have no chance of avoiding deportation.

Responding to the President's plan to increase immigration enforcement, Gov. Cuomo has proposed an emergency deportation defense fund to assist immigrants in deportation proceedings. The California Legislature and Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Connecticut and Washington, D.C., officials have also announced similar relief funds to protect their immigrant populations. These visionary leaders recognize the importance of counsel in removal proceedings.

The need for representation is great and will likely stretch beyond the resources that these states and cities can make available. Immigrants will need help from municipalities, foundations and private donors to ensure that they get a fair day in court. Innovative approaches are needed to meet a crisis that will only grow in the coming years.

For the past three years, Immigrant Justice Corps, a fellowship program dedicated to improving the quantity and quality of immigration representation, has been training the next generation of immigration lawyers. In two years, the program has impacted the lives of more than 15,000 immigrants residing in New York City, surrounding counties, New Jersey and Texas with 70 justice fellows (law graduates) and community fellows (college graduates). Additional funding could also assist modest-income earners who are ineligible for free legal services and immigrants who believe that paying for aid no matter how modest gets them better treatment.

In 2007, Judge Robert Katzmann (now chief judge) of the 2nd Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals first challenged the legal profession to meet the representation needs of poor immigrants; justice, he said, should not depend on whether an immigrant can afford a lawyer.

His clarion call rings out loud today. Immigration is America's past, present and future, and we should uphold the core principles of liberty and justice for all.

Annobil is executive director of the Immigrant Justice Corps.

An Immigrant's Rap Sheet Does Not Preclude A Vigorous Defense

By Heidi Altman

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) recently announced the creation of a legal defense fund for immigrants facing deportation ["New legal fund to aid immigrants," Metro, Jan. 10]. This proposal fills a gap in our federal government's ability to protect due-process rights for all. With no right to appointed counsel for immigrants facing deportation, more than 80 percent of detained immigrants represent themselves in immigration court.

The Jan. 23 editorial "Measured sanctuary" encouraged Ms. Bowser to exempt certain immigrants from receiving representation based on their criminal record. Yet immigrants with criminal convictions often have family members who are U.S. citizens and may be eligible for valid defenses against deportation. Since when do we allow a person's rap sheet to determine whether she or he has the right to a zealous defense in court?

The editorial board conflated legal representation with another aspect of D.C.'s sanctuary policy: the limits imposed on the District's compliance with federal immigration detainer requests. On that question, the board has succumbed to a narrative of fear rather than focusing on sound law and policy. A federal district court recently found Immigration and Customs Enforcement in violation of federal law in its detainer practices. Localities such as the District are acting responsibly when limiting their participation in this federal enforcement program.

Heidi Altman, Washington

The writer is director of policy for the National Immigrant Justice Center.

Trump's Immigration Order Expands The Definition Of 'Criminal'

By Jennifer Medina

New York Times, January 26, 2017

CBP FOIA000496

After President Trump signed two sweeping executive orders on immigration on Wednesday, most of the attention was on his plans to build a wall along the border with Mexico and to hold back money from "sanctuary cities." But the most immediate impact may come from language about deportation priorities that is tucked into the border wall order. It offers an expansive definition of who is considered a criminal — a category of people Mr. Trump has said he would target for deportation. Immigration agents will now have wider latitude to enforce federal laws and are being encouraged to deport broad swaths of unauthorized immigrants.

Here are some questions and answers about the changes:

Each presidential administration must decide who it considers a priority for deportation. Mr. Trump's order focuses on anyone who has been charged with a criminal offense, even if it has not led to a conviction. He also includes, according to language in the order, anyone who has "committed acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense," meaning anyone the authorities believe has broken any type of law — regardless of whether that person has been charged with a crime.

Mr. Trump's order also includes anyone who has engaged in "fraud or willful misrepresentation in connection with any official matter or application before a governmental agency," a category that includes anyone who has used a false Social Security number to obtain a job, as many unauthorized immigrants do. Anyone who has received a final order to leave the country, but has not left, is also considered a priority.

Finally, he allows the targeting of anyone who "in the judgment of an immigration officer" poses a risk to either public safety or national security. That gives immigration officers the broad authority they have been pressing for, and no longer requires them to receive a review from a supervisor before targeting individuals.

The order defines criminal loosely, and includes anyone who has crossed the border illegally — which is a criminal misdemeanor. Anyone who has abused any public benefits program is also considered a criminal under the order.

The Obama administration, which deported nearly 400,000 people per year during its first five years, initially included those convicted of minor offenses such as shoplifting. But it later changed its policy to target primarily those who had been convicted of serious crimes, were considered national security threats or were recent arrivals. By the end of Mr. Obama's time in office, around 90 percent of the country's 11 million undocumented immigrants were not considered a priority for deportation. According to the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank, roughly 820,000 undocumented immigrants currently have a criminal record.

It's impossible to know how many people will be considered priorities for deportation under the new criteria. Mr. Trump's executive order could impact any unauthorized immigrant who is not protected by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which the Obama administration put in place to give young people work permits and temporary relief from deportation. (Mr. Trump has not yet made clear whether he intends to keep that program.) Immigration lawyers have already raised concerns that people with no criminal history will be swept up by the large net the administration is casting.

The president does have the authority to decide who should be deported. But it is unclear whether the administration will be able to — or even try to — carry out deportations as expansively as suggested in the executive order's language. First, in order to put the 15,000 additional immigration agents he wants in place around the country and along the border, Mr. Trump needs spending approval from Congress. Even then, additional detention centers would also be needed.

The most significant hurdle is the tremendous backlog in the immigration courts. Even if immigration officials initiated thousands of deportations immediately, court dates for those immigrants would be at least a year and a half away. Some immigration experts have suggested that Mr. Trump will try to push for expedited removals, which could speed the process, and give immigrants less time to find legal representation.

Mr. Trump is opening the door to deporting far more unauthorized immigrants than previous administrations. "This is the largest expansion of any president in terms of who is a priority for removal," said Steve Yale-Loehr, a professor of immigration law at Cornell University. "Every administration has to prioritize who they will go after with their limited enforcement resources. This goes further than any other president. To make it simple: If someone is here illegally they are removable."

SECRET SERVICE

Birmingham Man Indicted On Counterfeiting, Firearms Charges

Gadsden (AL) Times, January 26, 2017

BIRMINGHAM — A federal grand jury on Thursday indicted a Birmingham man on counterfeiting and firearms charges, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

A three-count indictment filed in U.S. District Court charges Hollis Nikia Bullard, 22, with making counterfeit $100 bills, dealing in counterfeit $100 bills and possessing a Smith & Wesson Model 10 revolver as a convicted felon.

According to the indictment, Bullard was convicted of a felony burglary offense in Jefferson County Circuit Court in

August 2015, and for felony receipt of stolen property in February 2014.

Police arrested him Jan. 4 on the federal counterfeiting and firearm possession charges at his apartment in Birmingham, where they found counterfeit $100 bills. Secret Service agents recovered counterfeit bills totaling more than $15,000 in the course of the investigation.

The maximum penalty for both making counterfeit U.S. currency and dealing in counterfeit currency is 20 years in prison and a $250,000 fine. The maximum penalty for being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm is 10 years in prison and a $250,000 fine.

Die! High School Teacher Stages Mock Assassination Of Trump

By Todd Starnes

Fox News, January 26, 2017

A Texas high school art teacher has been placed on administrative leave after video surfaced showing her "shooting" President Donald Trump inside a classroom while screaming, "Die!"

The Secret Service field office in Irving tells me they are aware of the incident, but declined further comment.

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The teacher, at W.H. Adamson High School in Dallas, posted the video to her Instagram account along with the following message: "Watching the #inauguration in my classroom like…#no #stop #denial #squirtgun #hypocrisy #powerless #saveusall #teachthembetter #atleastitsfriday."

Voices can be heard in the background – but the school district would not say if students witnessed the teacher's disturbing demonstration.

The Inauguration Day video has since been removed, but several prominent conservative websites managed to save a copy including Town Hall and Resistance Media.

Video of the inauguration was being broadcast inside the classroom on a whiteboard. The video shows the teacher lunging at President Trump and firing the squirt gun numerous times while shouting, "Die!"

It is disturbing, to say the least.

Dallas Independent School District seems to be taking the matter quite seriously.

"Today, we were made aware of a social media posting being circulated involving a teacher at W. H. Adamson High School," a district spokesperson told me. "The teacher has been placed on administrative leave and the district has opened an investigation. This is a personnel matter and as such we cannot comment."

I wonder which offense the school district finds worst: a faux assassination or a teacher using a squirt gun on school property.

Since the 2016 presidential election, liberal educators across the fruited plain have gone slap crazy. I wrote about these phenomena in my new book, "The Deplorables' Guide to Making America Great Again."

Some teachers have even turned their classrooms into breeding grounds for anti-Trump propaganda – going so far as to portray the commander-in-chief as a modern-day Adolf Hitler.

And I lost count of the number of educators who refused to broadcast the inauguration ceremony over fears that some fragile snowflake might take offense.

But what happened in Dallas is yet another example of how our public schools have been turned into social engineering petri dishes festering with rancorous rhetoric and hate.

What kind of a person would stage a faux assassination attempt in of all places Dallas? It's simply repulsive.

Let's hope Dallas ISD can muster the moral courage to take swift action to rebuke this teacher and send a message that this kind of hate has no place in a public school classroom.

NATIONAL PROTECTION AND PROGRAMS

Missouri Senate Panel Advances Real ID Compliance Measure

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) – A Missouri Senate committee has advanced a proposal that could bring Missouri into compliance with federal driver's license requirements despite some Republican opposition.

The Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee voted 4-3 Thursday to send the measure to the full Senate.

Missouri law currently prohibits the state from complying with the federal 2005 Real ID Act, which set tougher proof-of-identity requirements in response to the 2001 terrorist attacks. Opponents have raised privacy concerns about provisions requiring states to keep personal information about license recipients.

The federal government has said driver's licenses from Missouri and other non-compliant states will no longer be accepted as identification at airports starting in January 2018.

The new Missouri legislation would give people a choice of getting licenses that are Real ID compliant or not.

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CYBER NEWS

Donald Trump May Be His Own Worst Cyber-Security Threat

By Maya Kosoff

Vanity Fair, January 26, 2017

A not-insignificant portion of Donald Trump's campaign centered on attacking the Democratic candidate for using a personal, private, unsecured communications while she was in office. On the stump, he pledged to investigate and prosecute her for her personal e-mail server, though he's since backed off that promise. One week into his tenure as president, however, Trump appears to still be using private lines of communication himself. Though he was reportedly given a secure device last week, he seems to still have his unsecured phone handy for tweeting purposes. When he tweeted a threat Tuesday night to send "the Feds" into Chicago, astute Twitter users noticed the tweets came from an Android device.

The New York Times reported Wednesday that Trump, to the chagrin of some of his aides, continues to use the unsecured Android phone:

Mr. Trump's wife, Melania, went back to New York on Sunday night with their 10-year-old son, Barron, and so Mr. Trump has the television—and his old, unsecured Android phone, to the protests of some of his aides—to keep him company.

Since becoming president last week, Trump has been tweeting from both the @POTUS Twitter account and his own @realDonaldTrump personal Twitter account, with tweets coming from both an iPhone and an Android device—likely meaning the tweets are sent both by him and also by aides, as they were before inauguration. It's not clear exactly what Android device Trump is using, though Android Central, a blog about the Android operating system, has determined Trump likely uses a Samsung Galaxy S3, which was first released five years ago. "It's safe to say it's a good three years out of step with the latest Android security updates," writer Alex Dobie said.

Twitter users have tried to figure out what email address Trump's Twitter account is tied to, and it seems to be connected to a Gmail address, as opposed to a secure, White House email address. It would also seem that the U.S. president does not have two-factor authentication, a known security feature of Twitter and other websites, enabled.

Users have apparently also tried to guess Trump's Twitter password so many times that they've exceeded the number of password attempts given to a Twitter account.

Trump's limited understanding of the Internet, which he has struggled to describe, and computer technology, which people close to him say he almost never uses, has resulted in a number of clumsy statements on cyber-security, though he has invariably described himself as an expert. In a September debate, he suggested that the party responsible for hacking the Democratic Party over the summer wasn't necessarily a foreign entity like Russia, but "somebody sitting on their bed that weighs 400 pounds." America, Trump went on to say, must "get very, very tough on cyber and cyber-warfare." He then brought up his youngest son, 10-year-old Barron Trump. "He has computers," Trump said. "He is so good with these computers. It's unbelievable. The security aspect of cyber is very, very tough." This idea of "cyber," as Trump refers to it, apparently extends to Trump's yet-unexplained plan to beat the Islamic State. "You know cyber is becoming so big today," he said during an appearance in Virginia in September. "It's becoming something that a number of years ago, a short number of years ago, wasn't even a word. And now the cyber is so big, and you know you look at what they're doing with the Internet. "

The greatest national-security threat to the United States, however, may be Trump: a technology-averse 70-year-old who apparently refuses to part with the consumer-grade device he uses at all hours of the day to blast out market-moving tweets and 140-character missives about nuclear weapons. One imagines it would not be difficult to hack the president, or to mimic his exclamatory, erratic rhetorical style, causing market chaos or, worse, a geopolitical panic. At a minimum, maybe Trump should take some advice from the person who successfully hacked hundreds of Islamic State Twitter accounts and update his security settings. The cyber is "so big," after all.

Trump's Phone: A Cybersecurity Threat?

By Eric Geller

Politico, January 26, 2017

Reports that President Donald Trump has resumed using his Android-powered smartphone are prompting security experts to warn that his Twitter addiction could open up vulnerabilities inside the Oval Office.

The New York Times reported Wednesday that Trump is still using "his old, unsecured Android phone, to the protests of some of his aides," even after a story last week said he had been supplied with "a secure, encrypted device approved by the Secret Service." That alarms experts who note that Android, an operating system developed by Google, is notoriously insecure, especially on older phones that no longer receive software updates from their manufacturers or wireless carriers.

The website Android Central cited photographic evidence to claim that Trump's go-to phone is a Samsung Galaxy S3, a model released in 2012 that has not received software updates since mid-2015. Researchers later uncovered one of the most dangerous Android vulnerabilities, the so-called Stagefright bug, which lets hackers take control of a phone using only a text message.

CBP FOIA000499

"It's just crazy that the president is interacting with such an out-of-date and likely insecure device," Matthew Green, a computer science professor at Johns Hopkins University, told POLITICO.

"His off-the-shelf Android could potentially become a room bug without his knowledge," said Bruce Schneier, one of the world's foremost cybersecurity experts. "An attacker could certainly hijack his apps."

The White House and the Secret Service did not respond to requests for comment. A spokeswoman for the Defense Information Systems Agency, which helps secure the president's communications, declined to comment on protective measures.

The continued questions about Trump's phone use come after a presidential campaign in which he and his allies repeatedly accused Hillary Clinton of endangering national security by using a private email server when she was secretary of State. They also alleged, without evidence, that foreign governments had breached the server.

For Trump and his phone, "the real issue is what he does with it," Schneier said in an email. "If he's using it to send and receive classified information, we have a real problem."

That might be unlikely for Trump, who once proclaimed that "no computer is safe" and has suggested that sensitive documents should be sent by courier. News reports say he doesn't use email and that he communicates with aides by scribbling comments on printed documents — rather than tapping out feedback on a smartphone keyboard the way former President Barack Obama often did.

But even if Trump isn't using the phone to send and receive sensitive messages, it still could open up security risks if hackers infect it. For example, they could use the phone to covertly track his location, tweet out fake news about terrorist attacks, or even eavesdrop through the camera and microphone. Depending on how securely the computer networks in the White House have been hardened, any malware already implanted on the phone could possibly roam to other officials' devices.

Even a phone running the latest, most secure version of Android available would still be at risk of being penetrated by foreign intelligence agencies, especially those of Russia and China. While these spies would similarly target an iPhone, security experts say the Apple device is more capable of repelling hackers.

"All of these attacks are possible, and even probable by the big national intelligence agencies," Schneier said.

In addition, the boom in smartphone technology has created a thriving market for the kinds of advanced phone-surveillance tools previously available only to powerful governments. Green said sophisticated criminal gangs could commander an Android device remotely "if there was enough financial incentive."

Trump's tweets frequently indicate that he is using Twitter's Android app, which is usually interpreted as a sign that the messages come from him directly — as opposed to the iPhone often used by his staff. The tweets don't indicate which Android model he is using.

While Android offers users much more flexibility and choice than the operating system that powers Apple's iPhones and iPads, that translates to less-rigorous security controls. Older and less expensive Android phones also lack the iron-clad encryption found on newer iPhones, which even the FBI has complained it's unable to crack.

The NSA has developed and released its own secure version of Android, but it's unclear whether the agency installed it on Trump's phone — or whether the phone is even capable of running it.

"It's pretty obvious that using a 2012-era phone is not a safe thing to do," Green said in an email.

Quantum Computer Worth $15 Million Sold To Tackle Cybersecurity

CNBC, January 26, 2017

A state-of-the-art computer system using quantum mechanics and valued at $15 million dollars has been sold to a cyber-security firm.

D-Wave, the developers of the quantum computer, announced the sale to Temporal Defense Systems , earlier this week. Temporal Defense Systems are the first customers for the D-Wave 2000Q Quantum Computer. Previous D-Wave customers include Lockheed Martin, Google and NASA.

D-Wave claims that using the quantum computer will enable the cyber security firm to perform real-time security level rating, device-to-device authentication and identify, detect and prevent threats.

D-Wave

The D-Wave 2000Q Quantum Computer

Dr Michael Green, of AI media platform Blackwood Seven, explained the difference between a quantum and a normal computer.

A standard computer uses binary data: every bit of data is either a one or a zero. Multiple bits are used to store memory, but each bit can only be in one state (position one or position zero) at any time.

"A quantum computer works totally differently, because you replace the bit with something called a qubit," Green told CNBC during a phone interview last year.

"The good thing about it is it can be in both states at the same time, so that means that if add, for example, five bits… that means that computer can be in 32 states at the same time. If you have five bits in a normal computer, it can still only be in one state at a time."

This means a quantum computer could perform 32 calculations at the same time as a normal computer performs one. That may not sound impressive, but the more bits that are added, the more calculations that can be done at once.

The D-Wave 2000Q Quantum Computer is claimed to have 2,000 qubits. D-Wave claims it was able to solve challenging problems 1,000 to 10,000 times faster than algorithms running on a server.

"We are the only company selling quantum computers, and our growing ecosystem of users and developers gives us the benefit of their practical experience as we develop products to solve real-world problems," said Vern Brownell, D-Wave's chief executive, said in a press release.

"While other organizations have prototypes with just a few qubits in their labs, D-Wave is delivering the systems, software, training, and services needed to build an industry."

Applying quantum computing to cyber security will be revolutionary, according to James Burrell, Temporal Defense Systems' chief technology officer.

"Combining the unique computational capabilities of a quantum computer with the most advanced cyber security technologies will deliver the highest level of security, focused on both prevention and attribution of cyber attacks," he said in a press release.

Microsoft To Continue To Invest Over $1 Billion A Year On Cyber Security

By Tova Cohen

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

AT&T Slams FCC's Cybersecurity Claims, Says It Has Resources To Thwart Attacks

By Sean Buckley

Fierce Telecom, January 26, 2017

AT&T is fighting back against claims made by the FCC that the telecom community lacks the capability to protect consumers and business customers from cyberattacks.

The FCC recently issued a white paper on "Cybersecurity Risk Reduction" that raised several issues around the role of internet service providers (ISPs) in cybersecurity.

According to the regulator, the rising tide of cyberattacks over the past decade signals a new approach is needed.

Specifically, the FCC said that because large ISPs hold strong market power, cyber threats are not relegated to those providers alone. Consumers could be caught in the middle because they might not be able to choose an ISP that has better or different security practices.

Second, the FCC said that individual service providers can't overcome marketwide barriers in order to strengthen security. The regulator suggested that "broader action" may be needed "by voluntary industry associations and/or by government action" to improve cybersecurity preparedness in the communications industry.

"When deciding how much to invest to reduce cyber risk, the cost-benefit analysis of ISPs naturally considers the risks to the firm," the FCC said in its paper. "Unfortunately, relying on market forces alone fails to adequately weigh the risks imposed on third parties who rely on the networks and services they provision. A cybersecurity gap confronts the public." AT&T disputes 'bold assertions'

However, AT&T disagrees with the FCC's assertions about its cybersecurity capabilities.

In a blog post, the service provider takes issue over two claims the FCC made in its paper: service providers like AT&T don't have the incentives to protect its network and customers from cyberattacks, and the regulator's authority over cybersecurity.

"The Bureau makes bold assertions but doesn't provide any evidence that there are a lack of incentives for carriers to protect their networks from cyberattacks," said Chris Boyer, assistant VP of global public policy for AT&T in the post. "Instead it relies on already-debunked assumptions that there is inadequate competition in the broadband marketplace, and then leaps to the conclusion that ISPs therefore won't invest in protecting their networks and customers from cyberattacks." Expertise growing

Being a large carrier, AT&T said it has employed a staff of security experts to analyze network traffic 24/7/365 to understand and identify emerging threats.

Today, AT&T has eight global security operation centers and holds 179 security and privacy patents. In order to keep up with new threats, AT&T has a "fleet" of cybersecurity experts, and it is actively training and retraining employees to increase its security staff.

On an average day, AT&T said that the telco's security experts see more than 30 billion vulnerability scans and 400 million spam messages "cross its global IP network every day." Interestingly, the increase of Internet of things (IoT) devices over the past three years has driven a 3,198% rise in vulnerability scans.

Boyer said, "we're well aware of the threats to our network and our customers, and are taking meaningful steps to counter these risks."

Here Are The 5 Scariest Revelations From Pew's New Cybersecurity Survey

Fast Company, January 26, 2017

A new survey from the Pew Research Center finds that most American adults have been the victims of some kind of

"major data breach," and that many of us don't trust big organizations to keep our data safe. Here's some of the more alarming numbers from the report:

• 41% of those surveyed reported having fraudulent charges on their credit cards

• 39% of respondents say they reuse passwords across accounts, and 41% have shared at least one password with a friend or relative

• 16% say someone has hijacked their email accounts, and 13% say one of their social media accounts has been hacked.

• 15% say they've gotten notice that their Social Security numbers were compromised

• 51% of respondents said they're "not at all confident" or "not too confident" in social media sites keeping their information safe—and 49% feel that way about the federal government.

Explaining Cybersecurity Threats In A Decision-maker Context – GCN

By Marvin Marin

Government Computer News, January 26, 2017

As cybersecurity professionals, I'm sure you've had this experience: you find a risk to your organization's systems, data and reputation, and you want to take action – recode, deploy a web application firewall or maybe even disconnect the system.

You don't want to make it sound like the sky is falling, but you need time and resources to correct the issue – now. You discuss the vulnerability with your team, and everyone agrees that the issue is urgent and must be remediated. You take your assessment of the vulnerability to leadership and say, "We have to take our system down. It has a blind SQL injection vulnerability that can be used to steal our data, passwords and allow an adversary to move laterally through our network." To cybersecurity professionals the problem is clear, and the decision should be easy to make.

The decision maker listens to you describe the problem and says, "That is the most important system we have. Build a plan of action and milestone, and we'll get the authorizing official to accept the risk and keep the system up."

You walk away knowing that nothing has been fixed – that a piece of paper won't keep your system secure and your agency is now vulnerable to a loss of data and customer trust when the inevitable breach makes the news.

As frustrating as this situation may be, the blame can't rest solely on management's shoulders; perhaps cyber professionals should accept part of the blame. Cyber professionals have a responsibility to identify and assess risk, but problems won't be remediated effectively until they can be explained in a way that can be understood and acted on by leadership. Putting cyber risk in context and communicating it effectively makes cyber professionals the source of real, relevant, reliable threat information. Effective communication helps senior executives balance the risks of the vulnerability with the need to sustain system availability.

Because members of an effective team, from management to the mailroom, all have their own areas of responsibility and their own language, views and understanding of risks, threats and costs, they may not immediately understand your perspective. To effectively communicate vulnerabilities, the risks they pose and the threats to the organization, you must understand what senior leaders are concerned about: the availability of critical systems, mission sustainment, the potential loss in dollars (from system recovery, fines, overtime, etc.) and the probability of exploit.

Once you grasp their language, views and understanding, you must be able to explain how the vulnerability you've unearthed will impact everyone else in the organization, what data and systems are at risk and the potential cost of being compromised. While you may have a complete understanding of the data on your systems and its potential vulnerabilities, others in your organization may not. It's up to you to communicate the impact across all missions and business functions.

In short, you must connect the dots for senior leaders, mission owners, chief financial officers and other executives. Show them how the compromise of one application or system can mean much more than that – the potential compromise of every bit of data on every system in your entire organization.

Revisiting the same problem from this different direction will better illustrate the impact of a newfound vulnerability.

Your assessment found a blind SQL injection on a public-facing web application. You note that the system is hosting personally identifiable information and that there are PII records for 512,000 users in the database across all major business lines (finance, operations, logistics, etc.) in your organization. Your research shows that the cost of recovery from loss of one PII record is around $221, making the total cost well over $113 million. You have your team quickly draft a proof-of-concept exploit to extract records from the affected database to prove that the vulnerability is real.

A quick Google search for the site with the vulnerability reveals a discussion board that says, "It looks like system X has a blind SQL injection issue; has anyone figured out how to exploit it?"

You now have the data you need to communicate the scope of the problem in the terms that are important to management.

"We have a critical issue with system X. We know it is hosting PII, with a potential data breach price tag of $113 million. Additionally, there is evidence this system is being targeted by hackers. We should act rapidly to fix this." From

there, you could recommend actions that are far less expensive than the cost of recovering from a data breach:

Removing external web access and working with the program manager or system owner to fix the source code (emergency maintenance window).

Deploying a web application firewall to provide virtual patching and detection/prevention of threats.

By speaking to management's concerns, you have gained leadership's attention and established the potential cost if the vulnerability is exploited. You have proved you understand their needs and have shown how your work can support their decision making by providing realistic, actionable solutions that will keep your organization secure.

As cyber professionals, it's our job not only to find vulnerabilities, but also to help decision makers understand the nature, impact and context of each as well as help them understand the available courses of action and their relative costs, impacts and benefits. We must learn to place cyber issues in the language and context of our business or mission leaders. In doing so, cybersecurity teams will gain increased credibility, decrease attack surfaces and help decision makers understand critical tradeoffs – all toward the goal of improving the organization's security posture.

Executive leadership drives the business and sometimes accepts operational risk as part of the normal business process, but it's up to cyber professionals to communicate findings effectively, with context and in terms best understood by senior executives, to ensure timely and effective action.

Marvin Marin is program manager at NetCentrics Corporation.

NY Man Linked To Islamic State Gets 20 Years Prison For New Year's Eve Plot

By Jonathan Stempel

Reuters, January 26, 2017

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New CIA Director Inherits An Agency That Is Quickly Developing Cyber Capabilities

By Chris Bing

CyberScoop, January 26, 2017

The CIA's Directorate of Digital Innovation is now delivering the kinds of cyber-espionage tools and intelligence-gathering capabilities that the agency was seeking when then-Director John Brennan created it two years ago, says a senior official with the program.

The unit has moved beyond its initial period of integration with the spy agency, said Sean Roche, the DDI's associate deputy director. It's now "delivering capabilities that will enable CIA to transform the business of intelligence," he said, at a time when the CIA is transitioning to new leadership.

"We are creating agile digital environments to enhance our ability to collaborate as an Agency and Intelligence Community," Roche said. "The vision is to create pathways for persistent clandestine and open-source collection that feed data exploitation and curation."

The Langley, Virginia-based office's mission is to streamline and integrate digital and cybersecurity capabilities into the CIA's espionage, counterintelligence, all-source analysis, open-source intelligence collection and covert action operations.

The DDI's progress also comes as Donald Trump's administration evaluates the role, responsibility and mission of nearly every federal organization. On Monday, the Senate confirmed Trump's pick to replace Brennan, Mike Pompeo.

"The DDI is firing on all cylinders," Roche said of the unit's momentum.

Pompeo, formerly a House member from Kansas, steps into Langley with the benefit of a DDI that has been working for more than a year to broadly modernize the premier U.S. intelligence agency — an effort that includes the adoption of cloud data-storage technologies and secure dev-ops coding projects, as well as "digital collaboration environments and mobility through wireless," Roche said.

Roche is a career federal employee with 35 years of service in the government. Prior to his current job, he held various executive positions with the

Homeland Security Department's Directorate for Science and Technology — a research and development arm with a national security focus. Roche's boss, DDI Director Andrew Hallman, is CIA veteran with decades of leadership experience.

"A digital world challenges the way we work in a clandestine world. We have to come up with new ways to operate in a much more connected environment and still be clandestine," Hallman said in an interview with DefenseOne. "The way we help people use digital and cyber techniques, [the DDI] will raise it to a new level."

Last summer, Brennan said the DDI would help the spy agency succeed in an era of "big data," which requires that analysts mine through vast volumes of digital information to find actionable intelligence.

"I felt a special responsibility since I served 25 years in CIA to do what I could here on the organizational front to make sure that we're postured well for the future," Brennan said in a December interview with NPR. "I've talked to Mike [Pompeo] about the modernization program we have underway here. He is very familiar with it … I told him that to me, the modernization process should never end because we have to constantly adapt to the realities that we have to deal with in the outside world."

The launch of the DDI represented the CIA's first new Directorate since 1963.

Little is known about how the office specifically functions or if it deploys "offensive" cyber capabilities.

The CIA declined to discuss whether the DDI's staff size has grown since the unit's conception in early 2015.

Publicly viewable CIA job postings show that the spy agency is currently hiring for digital forensic engineers, cyberthreat analysts, cybersecurity officers and operations officers. Qualified applicants for these positions will come with some knowledge of "network penetration testing, network defense, operating systems, communication technologies, network security" and "reverse engineering."

In the past, the CIA has traditionally worked "very closely with the intelligence community and law enforcement colleagues, including the NSA, FBI, Homeland Security Department, and other agencies, to address" cyberthreats aimed at the U.S., said CIA spokesperson Heather Fritz Horniak.

One of the CIA's primary responsibilities pertaining to cybersecurity includes the collection of human and digital, or signals, intelligence to identify foreign hackers. What sets the CIA apart from its counterparts is the agency's ability to collect human intelligence from a clandestine network of agents operating around the globe.

"Cyber-defense is very much a team sport across the [government]. As an all-source overseas collector, CIA leverages the widest range of HUMINT, collection platforms, and technical capabilities to discover the plans and intentions of hostile foreign cyber actors," Horniak said. "The intelligence reports generated by DDI officers inform our partners across the federal government in order to support their cyber-incident responses."

According to classified budget documents shared with the Washington Post, the CIA's computer network operations budget for fiscal year 2013 was $685.4 million. The NSA's budget was roughly $1 billion at the time.

Connected Cars Are Ripe For Hacking

By Dan Steiner

CIO Magazine, January 26, 2017

Technology has taken over almost every area of consumers' lives, from the way they work and play to the toys their children use. In addition to finding ways to connect homes to the internet, innovators have also begun developing software and hardware for the cars people drive every day. When a vehicle can connect to the internet, automakers can build in amenities that make their products more desirable to consumers.

But like the many other devices that can communicate, connected vehicles bring security issues. As connected cars gradually become more mainstream, it's important that consumers be aware of the dangers they face from a security breach.

The dangers

Last year, the FBI, Department of Transportation, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued a memo warning of the dangers of connected vehicles. One of the most eminent threats, as detailed in the memo, is the possibility of a takeover of the car's operations. A hacker could find his or her way into a vehicle's computer and take control, leading to an accident. A hacker could disable a vehicle's brakes or steering or could shut the engine down completely. On a less threatening level, a hacker could also manipulate a vehicle's door locks, turn signal, radio, GPS, or other on-board system.

Now that cars are connected, police departments are also concerned about vehicle theft. Using laptops, thieves can bypass a vehicle's ignition system and steal a car. The software is similar to that used by dealers and locksmiths to program an ignition for a car owner, so it can be difficult to prevent such attacks. This type of attack applies especially to those who own cars with keyless entry and ignition.

Any connection that can be intercepted can be prone to viruses and data breaches, which means that any information stored on that device could be stolen, including credit card numbers and contact data. As automotive software becomes more sophisticated, hackers will be able to collect even more information on a person's life, leading to increased concerns about identity theft. While this isn't as concerning as a remote vehicle takeover, it's a real issue that automakers will need to safeguard against in the coming years.

The solution

All of this information is useless if it doesn't include actionable advice. Currently, vehicle software updates are handled two ways: through being pushed to your car's software and through automotive recalls. Software updates are the ideal scenario, since car owners aren't required to take the car to the dealership for service. Vehicle owners will increasingly notice software updates installing when they start their car. When automotive manufacturers are proactive about preventing malware and third-party vehicle takeovers, they'll protect themselves against the reputation damage that comes from a breach.

In addition to keeping a vehicle safe, in time the software could be set up to help consumers. As one expert pointed out, when a vehicle's software detects a maintenance issue, its driver could receive a notification of nearby dealerships offering deals on that service at that time. This would provide a level of usability that would increase a customer's loyalty to a specific make of car.

Dealer recalls

For those updates that can't be automatically pushed, a visit to the dealer is the only option. Auto manufacturers send recalls that urge owners of certain vehicle makes and models

to visit the dealer as soon as possible for an update. Once in the hands of a dealership, the vehicle's software can be updated using certified software.

Unfortunately, many car owners ignore recalls. According to J.D. Power, more than 45 million vehicles that were recalled due to safety issues between 2013 were not brought in for service. One of the biggest reasons for the lethargy is the sheer volume of annual recalls. When a car owner only sees one recall over the course of owning a vehicle, for instance, it's much more likely to be taken seriously than when those recalls are coming at a pace of one per month. This apathy highlights the importance of finding a way to automate software updates rather than rely on the car being physically present in the dealership.

Automotive software will only become more sophisticated over time. If manufacturers take steps to ensure consumers remain safe in the process, they can win brand loyalty and improve usability.

Federal Lawmakers Introduce Bipartisan Bill To Study Cyber Security In Connected Cars

By Jillian Stampher

GeekWire, January 26, 2017

Connected cars are the future for the automotive industry, with more than 90 percent of vehicles expected to have built-in connectivity by 2020. But, as more vehicles link up to the internet, lawmakers are worried about their security.

On Wednesday, lawmakers introduced a bipartisan bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that would direct the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to study cyber security in vehicles. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-SC, and Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., co-sponsored The Security and Privacy in Your Car Study Act, which hopes to create a standard for safety in connected cars.

The bill requires the NHTSA to work with the Defense Department, the Federal Trade Commission, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Automotive Information Sharing and Analysis Center, SAE International, academics and manufacturers in the automotive industry.

Together, the group would study how to isolate software systems in vehicles, create a system to prevent and detect hacks, determine best practices for storing data and create a timeline for how to implement these standards.

"It's something of a daunting challenge to balance disruptive technological innovation with federal safety and privacy protections," Rep. Wilson and Rep. Lieu wrote in an April 2016 op-ed in The Hill. "As a result, all applicable government agencies need to be on the same page when assessing a cyber threat or measuring a cyberattack."

Concerns about security in cars connected to the internet comes at a time when the automotive and tech industries are investing more into the platform. Tesla has long had a hold on the market, but in the last several years, it's seen significant growth. Tech giants Apple and Google are pushing against automakers Ford, GM and Toyota to gain ground. Earlier this month, Microsoft announced it's creating a set of services for automakers to use in connected cars, shifting away from creating it's own such vehicle.

In her blog post announcing the new platform, Peggy Johnson, Microsoft's executive vice president of business development, said that the infrastructure needed to build a connected car is "incredibly complicated. By partnering with automakers, Microsoft can handle the data, the automotive manufacturers focus on the safety of the vehicle.

Safety continues to be a main concern with connected cars. In 2015, Chrysler recalled 1.4 million vehicles after WIRED released a video showing hackers taking control of a Jeep and driving into a ditch.

Rep. Wilson and Rep. Lieu seek to address such concerns by creating industry-wide standard for connected cars. If enacted, the NHTSA study will be conducted over the course of one year and then be presented to Congress.

"The public and private sectors must work together to ensure that a car can never become a weapon," the congressmen wrote in The Hill last year. "It remains critical that the federal government leverage the expertise and research that the private sector has already invested in this critical issue."

DCC Earns Designation As National Center Of Excellence In Cyber Defense

By Trevor Metcalfe

Danville (VA) Register & Bee., January 26, 2017

Gov. Terry McAuliffe announced the National Security Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security had officially designated Danville Community College as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense at a DCC event Thursday.

"This prestigious designation is not only good news for DCC, it is good news for the commonwealth," McAuliffe said.

The governor made the announcement to a room filled with DCC students and staff, Danville and Pittsylvania County elected officials, Danville and Pittsylvania County school leaders and McAuliffe administration officials.

To earn the distinction, DCC and its cyber security program had to demonstrate significant contributions in areas like cyber security education, outreach and knowledge. DCC is now one of only four schools in Virginia with this designation.

McAuliffe said he believed the program would help transform the workforce into one ready for some of the highest paying and widest available jobs anywhere in the country.

"I talk about cyber security every single day," McAuliffe said.

According to McAuliffe, there are around 3,600 unfilled cyber security jobs available today in Virginia with an average starting salary of $88,000. They help guard against cyber attacks on personal data, medical records, bank accounts and other types of data.

"These are the jobs of the 21st century," McAuliffe said.

Additionally, McAuliffe said many of the jobs could be performed remotely, making it perfect for rebuilding areas of the state like Southwest Virginia and the Dan River Region.

"You can do these jobs everywhere," he said.

DCC Professor and Cyber Center Director Steve Carrigan started working on the receiving the designation in 2015. Then, he wasn't sure if he would be able to complete the long, arduous process.

"The past 18 months have been something else," Carrigan said.

Carrigan said he was also proud of many of his alumni.

"In fact, some of them are now coming back and hiring current graduates," Carrigan said.

DCC student David Payne came to the school in 2015 in search of a new career and a new start. After just a few months in the program, he was hired by Hewlett Packard Enterprise as an IT specialist.

"I would not be where I am today without Danville Community College's information technology and cybersecurity programs, which gave me the technical skills and know how to make a career out of doing what I love," he said.

Doomsday Clock Ticks Closer To Apocalypse And 1 Person Is To Blame

By Mary Bowerman

USA Today, January 26, 2017

Scientists moved the hands of the Doomsday Clock closer to midnight on Thursday amid increasing worries over nuclear weapons and climate change.

Each year, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, a nonprofit that sets the clock, decides whether the events of the previous year pushed humanity closer or further from destruction. The symbolic clock is now two-and-a-half minutes from midnight, the closest it's been to midnight since 1953, when the hydrogen bomb was first tested. Scientists blamed a cocktail of threats ranging from dangerous political rhetoric to the potential of nuclear threat as the catalyst for moving the clock closer towards doomsday.

"This year's Clock deliberations felt more urgent than usual…as trusted sources of information came under attack, fake news was on the rise, and words were used by a President-elect of the United States in cavalier and often reckless ways to address the twin threats of nuclear weapons and climate change," Rachel Bronson, the executive director and publisher of Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, said in a statement.

While many threats played into the decision to move the clock 30 seconds forward from where it was in 2016, one person in particular prompted the scientists to act.

"Never before has the Bulletin decided to advance the clock largely because of the statements of a single person. But when that person is the new president of the United States, his words matter," David Titley and Lawrence M. Krauss of the Bulletin wrote in an New York Times op-ed.

The Bulletin pointed to President Donald Trump's careless rhetoric on nuclear weapons and other issues as well as his troubling stance on climate change.

"Current political situation in the U.S. is of particular concern," Titley of the Bulletin Science and Security Board said. "The Trump administration needs to state clearly, unequivocally it accepts climate change caused by human activity…There are no alternative facts here."

Last year, the clock remained at three minutes from midnight. It was moved to three minutes in 2015 where it was previously at five minutes to midnight.

Manhattan Project scientists, concerned about the first atomic weapons, founded the nonprofit Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in 1945. They created the clock two years later, and update its minute hand each year.

According to the group, the clock "conveys how close we are to destroying our civilization with dangerous technologies of our own making."

The threat of nuclear warfare plays heavily into the time on the clock, as do the dangers of climate change the threat from cyber technology, according to the group's website.

The decision is made by the board of the nonprofit Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' along with input from a board of sponsors which includes 15 Nobel Laureates, according to the group.

Follow Mary Bowerman on Twitter: @MaryBowerman

Doomsday Clock Moves Closer To Midnight, Signaling Concern Among Scientists

By Jonah Engel Bromwich

New York Times, January 26, 2017

It is getting closer to midnight.

On Thursday, the group of scientists who orchestrate the Doomsday Clock, a symbolic instrument informing the public when the earth is facing imminent disaster, moved its minute hand from three to two and a half minutes before the final hour.

It was the closest the clock had been to midnight since 1953, the year after the United States and the Soviet Union conducted competing tests of the hydrogen bomb.

Though scientists decide on the clock's position, it is not a scientific instrument, or even a physical one. The movement of its symbolic hands is decided upon by the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. The organization introduced the clock on the cover of its June 1947 edition, placing it at seven minutes to midnight. Since then, it has moved closer to midnight and farther away, depending on the board's conclusions.

Thursday's announcement was made by Rachel Bronson, the executive director and publisher of the bulletin. She was assisted by the theoretical physicist Lawrence Krauss, the climate scientist and meteorologist David Titley, and the former United States ambassador Thomas Pickering.

Ms. Bronson, in a post-announcement interview, explained why the board had included the 30 second mark in the measurement. She said that it was an attention-catching signal that was meant to acknowledge "what a dangerous moment we're in, and how important it is for people to take note."

"We're so concerned about the rhetoric, and the lack of respect for expertise, that we moved it 30 seconds," she said. "Rather than create panic, we're hoping that this drives action."

In an op-ed for The New York Times, Mr. Titley and Mr. Krauss elaborated on their concerns, citing the increasing threats of nuclear weapons and climate change, as well as President Trump's pledges to impede what they see as progress on both fronts, as reasons for moving the clock closer to midnight.

"Never before has the Bulletin decided to advance the clock largely because of the statements of a single person," they wrote. "But when that person is the new president of the United States, his words matter."

The board has held the responsibility for the clock's movements since 1973, when the bulletin's editor, Eugene Rabinowitch, died. Composed of scientists, and nuclear and climate experts, the board meets biannually to discuss where the clock's hands should fall in light of world events.

In the 1950s, the scientists feared nuclear annihilation, and since then, the board has begun to consider other existential threats, including climate change, compromised biosecurity and artificial intelligence.

There were crises that the clock was not quick enough to take into account. The Cuban Missile Crisis, for instance, in 1962, did not change the hands of the clock, which at the time stood at seven minutes to midnight.

An explanation on the Bulletin's website accounts for this seeming lapse in timekeeping: "The Cuban Missile Crisis, for all its potential and ultimate destruction, only lasted a few weeks," it says. "However, the lessons were quickly apparent when the United States and the Soviet Union installed the first hotline between the two capitals to improve communications, and, of course, negotiated the 1963 test ban treaty, ending all atmospheric nuclear testing."

The end of the Cold War came as a relief to those who had lived in fear of nuclear annihilation for decades, and the minute hand slowly moved away from danger. In 1990, it was at 10 minutes to midnight. The next year, it was a full 17 minutes away, at the relatively undisturbing time of 11:43.

"The illusion that tens of thousands of nuclear weapons are a guarantor of national security has been stripped away," the Bulletin said at the time.

But over the next two decades the clock slowly ticked back. Conflict between India and Pakistan, both of whom staged nuclear weapons tests three weeks apart, had the clock at nine minutes to midnight in 1998. By 2007, fears about Iranian and North Korean nuclear capacity had pushed it to 11:55.

By 2015, the scientists were back in a state of unmitigated concern, with the clock at three minutes to midnight, the closest it had been since 1984.

"Unchecked climate change, global nuclear weapons modernizations, and outsized nuclear weapons arsenals pose extraordinary and undeniable threats to the continued existence of humanity," the bulletin said. "World leaders have failed to act with the speed or on the scale required to protect citizens from potential catastrophe."

"These failures of political leadership endanger every person on Earth," it added.

Atomic Scientists Move Doomsday Clock Closer To Midnight: Apocalypse Now?

A group of Nobel laureates believe the world is a less safe place with Trump in the White House.

By Andrew Soergel, Economy Reporter

U.S. News & World Report, January 26, 2017

A clock sits outside of Trump Tower at midnight on Oct. 8 in New York. Evan Vucci/AP

A group of Nobel laureates believes the world has inched a step closer to the apocalypse after the swearing in of President Donald Trump.

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists – which for 70 years has maintained a symbolic "Doomsday Clock" – announced Thursday that they believe a combination of international stressors and Trump's position in the White House could bring about the end of days.

The figurative clock reads like an analog clock face, with midnight symbolizing the end of the world.

Founded by a group of University of Chicago scientists who worked on The Manhattan Project's first atomic weapons, the Bulletin's members now believe humanity is two and a half minutes to midnight.

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"Over the course of 2016, the global security landscape darkened as the international community failed to come effectively to grips with humanity's most pressing existential threats, nuclear weapons and climate change," the group said in a statement. "This already-threatening world situation was the backdrop for a rise in strident nationalism worldwide in 2016, including in a U.S. presidential campaign during which the eventual victor, Donald Trump, made disturbing comments about the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons and expressed disbelief in the overwhelming scientific consensus on climate change."

The scientists laid out a laundry list of international issues that could expedite the world's end, including conflict in Syria and Ukraine, North Korea's nuclear and missile testing, tension between India and Pakistan, doubt over the future of the Iran nuclear deal and the complicated relationship between the U.S. and Russia.

Two of the scientists wrote in a New York Times op-ed Thursday that Trump's election could further complicate this volatile world stage.

"We understand that Mr. Trump has been in office only days, that many of his cabinet nominees are awaiting confirmation and that he has had little time to take official action," they said. "But Mr. Trump's statements and actions have been unsettling. He has made ill-considered comments about expanding and even deploying the American nuclear arsenal."

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[RELATED: Dow 20,000: Does It Matter, and What Happens Next?]

The scientists also put strong emphasis on climate change in their Doomsday Clock assessments – an issue that Trump and some of his cabinet members haven't exactly supported. The Trump administration earlier this week put a gag order on scientists at the Environmental Protection Agency and was reportedly looking into stripping down a significant portion of the EPA's website. Trump suggested in a meeting with business leaders that environmental regulations have gotten "out of control," and his pick to head the EPA, Scott Pruitt, has questioned human impact on climate change.

None of this likely sat well with a group of scientists that believes climate change is up there with nuclear weapons as "humanity's most pressing existential threats," per the group's statement.

But the scientists' move was a relatively small one – only 30 seconds on the Doomsday Clock. This was the first time the group inched their Armageddon projections forward by a fraction of a minute. The board based its decision on the fact that Trump has only been in the White House for "a matter of days."

"Just the same, words matter, and President Trump has had plenty to say over the last year," the statement said. "Both his statements and his actions as president-elect have broken with historical precedent in unsettling ways."

[READ: Donald Trump Activates Immigration Overhaul]

Still, the scientists stopped short of saying Trump will definitively bring about the end of the world. The clock was only two minutes to midnight – slightly closer than it is now – back in 1953, when the U.S. and the Soviet Union both tested thermonuclear weapons in a relatively short span of time.

The world obviously didn't end back then, so it may be premature to head to the bunker just yet. But the Nobel prize-winning scientists believe the end of days is slightly closer than it was a year ago.

Tags: Donald Trump, EPA, Nobel Prize

The Doomsday Clock Is About To Be Updated For The First Time Since Trump Started Talking About Nuclear Weapons

By W.j. Hennigan, Contact Reporter

Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump's comments about the U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal have for months rattled arms-control advocates about how his administration might change half a century of policy and posture.

On Thursday, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists will weigh in with its annual assessment, the iconic Doomsday Clock.

The metaphorical clock shows how close the world is to "midnight," or a worldwide catastrophe. The closest the clock has ever been was 2 minutes to midnight in 1953 in the early days of above-ground hydrogen bomb testing. It held steady last year, after ticking down to 3 minutes to midnight in 2015.

The group, started by physicists who built the atomic bomb as part of the Manhattan Project, makes its decision principally based on the possible use of nuclear weapons, but includes climate change and technologies that could inflict irrevocable harm, whether by intention, miscalculation or accident.

Leaving the clock at 3 minutes till or moving it closer to midnight would suggest that experts are alarmed by Trump's loose talk about nuclear weapons, as well as North Korea's nuclear tests over the last year. Adding time would be a sign that concerns about Trump's possible use of nuclear weapons are perhaps overblown.

"With the clock currently set at just 3 minutes to midnight, there's precious little 'real estate' left if things get dramatically worse," said Stephen Schwartz, a nuclear weapons policy expert and the organization's former executive director.

"I lived through the tense and dangerous early to mid-1980s; it's the reason I made understanding, controlling and eliminating nuclear weapons my career," he said. "I have no desire to go backward to that era."

Trump's comments first raised concerns among experienced arms control advocates when he repeatedly referred to nuclear weapons as "the nuclear," which indicated an unfamiliarity with the subject. It was further heightened when he said he was amenable to more nations, namely Japan and perhaps Saudi Arabia, developing their own nuclear weapons, and that it was inevitable.

After winning the presidential election, he told MSNBC: "Let it be an arms race. We will outmatch them at every pass and outlast them all."

The same day he wrote on Twitter: "The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes."

Now Trump has taken over a government that is implementing an estimated $348-billion plan to modernize its nuclear forces. Begun under former President Obama, the effort has taken on increased significance amid the emergence of a defiant Russia and a new generation of nuclear powers, including India and Pakistan. It has also has raised questions of a renewed arms race like the one that defined much of the Cold War.

The administration is at work developing plans for fielding new land-based nuclear-tipped missiles that could be launched in minutes, underwater submarines capable to deliver a devastating atomic counterpunch to any surprise attack, and stealth bombers that could be scrambled for a long-range strike at a moment's notice.

Over the last half a century, weapons treaties have led to a dramatic drop in the number of warheads. At the peak of the Cold War in the 1960s, the U.S. had more than 30,000 nuclear weapons — 400 targeted on Moscow alone.

The numbers fluctuate, but Russia currently has 428 more warheads than the U.S., while the United States has 173 more delivery systems, according to the State Department Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance. Under the New START Treaty, each country will deploy no more than 1,550 strategic weapons by February 2018.

However, the future of nonproliferation treaties appears bleak as Russia, North Korea, China, Pakistan and India all work to improve their nuclear arsenals and delivery systems.

The Pentagon is headlong into the decade-long process of developing a new stealth bomber, dubbed the B-21 Raider, and replacing the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine. The Air Force last month started initial assessments of a new intercontinental ballistic missile.

The Energy Department has also embarked on an ambitious plan to extend the design life of existing thermonuclear warheads, improve national laboratories and facilities, and bring in the next generation of talented scientists.

The cost of all of this is estimated to approach $1 trillion over the next 30 years.

It's a small price to pay, Defense Secretary James N. Mattis said during his confirmation hearing this month, because nuclear deterrence is the foundation of U.S. security.

"My view of the Department of Defense's strategic priorities is that we must first maintain a safe and secure nuclear deterrent," Mattis said. "I consider the deterrent to be critical because we don't ever want those weapons used. So either the deterrent is safe and secure, it is compelling, or we actually open the door for something worse, whether it be a technical accident or political accident. So to me it's an absolute priority."

The Doomsday Clock Just Advanced Again: It's Now Two-and-a-half Minutes Closer To 'Midnight.'

By Peter Holley

Sacramento (CA) Bee, January 26, 2017

It's now two-and-a-half minutes to "midnight," according to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, which warned Thursday that the end of humanity may be nigh.

The group behind the famed Doomsday Clock announced at a news conference that it was adjusting the countdown to the End of it All by moving the hands 30 seconds closer to midnight – the closest the clock has been to Doomsday since 1953, after the United States tested its first thermonuclear device, followed months later by the Soviet Union's hydrogen bomb test.

In announcing that the Doomsday Clock was moving 30 seconds closer to the end of humanity, the group noted that in 2016, "the global security landscape darkened as the international community failed to come effectively to grips with humanity's most pressing existential threats, nuclear weapons and climate change."

But the organization also cited the election of Donald Trump in changing the symbolic clock.

"Making matters worse, the United States now has a president who has promised to impede progress on both of those fronts," theoretical physicist Lawrence M. Krauss and retired Rear Adm. David Titley wrote in a New York Times op-ed on behalf of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist. "Never before has the Bulletin decided to advance the clock largely because of the statements of a single person. But when that person is the new president of the United States, his words matter."

The clock is symbolic, sitting at the intersection of art and science, and it has wavered between two minutes and 17 minutes til doom since its inception in 1947. A board of

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scientists and nuclear experts meets regularly to determine what time it is on the Doomsday Clock.

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists was founded by some of the people who worked on the Manhattan Project. One of them, nuclear physicist Alexander Langsdorf, was married to artist Martyl Langsdorf. She created the clock and set it at seven minutes to midnight, or 11:53, for the cover of the group's magazine. Her husband moved the time four minutes later in 1949.

Since then, the bulletin's board has determined when the clock's minute hand will move, usually to draw attention to worldwide crises that, the board believes, threaten the survival of the human species. The group's reasoning focuses almost exclusively on the availability of nuclear weapons and a willingness among the world's great powers to use them.

In 2016, the bulletin said in its statement Thursday, "the United States and Russia – which together possess more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons – remained at odds in a variety of theaters, from Syria to Ukraine to the borders of NATO; both countries continued wide-ranging modernizations of their nuclear forces, and serious arms control negotiations were nowhere to be seen. North Korea conducted its fourth and fifth underground nuclear tests and gave every indication it would continue to develop nuclear weapons delivery capabilities. Threats of nuclear warfare hung in the background as Pakistan and India faced each other warily across the Line of Control in Kashmir after militants attacked two Indian army bases."

The group noted that "the climate change outlook was somewhat less dismal – but only somewhat."

Notably, the bulletin added: "This already-threatening world situation was the backdrop for a rise in strident nationalism worldwide in 2016, including in a US presidential campaign during which the eventual victor, Donald Trump, made disturbing comments about the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons and expressed disbelief in the overwhelming scientific consensus on climate change."

Thomas Pickering, a former undersecretary of state who also served as ambassador to the United Nations and Israel, cited Trump's "casual talk" about nuclear weapons in telling reporters that "nuclear rhetoric is now loose and destabilizing."

"We are more than ever impressed that words matter, words count," he said.

In their op-ed, Krauss and Titley wrote:

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We understand that Mr. Trump has been in office only days, that many of his cabinet nominees are awaiting confirmation and that he has had little time to take official action.

But Mr. Trump's statements and actions have been unsettling. He has made ill-considered comments about expanding and even deploying the American nuclear arsenal. He has expressed disbelief in the scientific consensus on global warming. He has shown a troubling propensity to discount or reject expert advice related to international security. And his nominees to head the Energy Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of Management and the Budget have disputed or questioned climate change.

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Throughout the presidential campaign, Trump faced a recurring charge: that he could not be trusted with the nation's nuclear weapons.

In August, a group of 50 former national security officials who served Republican and Democratic presidents signed an open letter saying Trump lacked the character, values and experience to be president.

"All of these are dangerous qualities in an individual who aspires to be President and Commander-in-Chief, with command of the U.S. nuclear arsenal," the group wrote.

The worst-possible scenario was at times unspoken but clear – that Trump's lack of self-control could spark nuclear war.

"A man you can bait with a tweet is not a man we can trust with nuclear weapons," his Democratic campaign rival, Hillary Clinton, charged.

While Trump has repeatedly dismissed those criticisms, he has done little to calm fears of impending nuclear war since winning the presidency. Last month, Trump tweeted that the United States "must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability." He did not elaborate on the message, which followed comments by Russian President Vladimir Putin about strengthening his country's nuclear arsenal.

Trump tweeted: The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes

Trump's tweet – and comments he reportedly made the following day to MSNBC's "Morning Joe" co-host Mika Brzezinski – sparked fears of a renewed arms race between the two countries.

Though Trump later seemed to walk back his statements, suggesting in an interview with two European publications that "nuclear weapons should be way down," there were reasons to be concerned after he gained control of the United States' nearly 1,400 active nuclear warheads Friday, wrote The Washington Post's Ishaan Tharoor.

Two days after Trump was elected, the current mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki invited him to visit, the Japan Times reported.

Then, Tadatoshi Akiba, the former mayor of Hiroshima, wrote a letter to Trump just before his inauguration, urging him to make "wise and peaceable" decisions regarding nuclear weapons.

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'Doomsday Clock' Moves 30 Seconds Closer To Midnight

By Paulina Firozi

The Hill, January 26, 2017

The minute hand on the "Doomsday Clock" has edged closer to midnight, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists announced Thursday, citing concerns with President Trump's comments on nuclear arms and climate change as part of the reason for the move.

The group made the "unprecedented" move to change the minute hand from 3 minutes to midnight, where it has been since 2015, to 2.5 minutes to midnight.

"Factors influencing the 2017 deliberations regarding any adjustment that may be made to the Doomsday Clock include: a rise in strident nationalism worldwide, President Donald Trump's comments on nuclear arms and climate issues prior to his inauguration on January 20th, a darkening global security landscape that is coloured by increasingly sophisticated technology, and a growing disregard for scientific expertise," the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists said in a statement ahead of its live event on Thursday.

"Make no mistake, this has been a difficult year," said the executive director and publisher of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Rachel Bronson, according to NPR.

The Doomsday Clock was established in 1947 by physicists who were part of the Manhattan Project as a way to indicate the likelihood of a potentially world-ending nuclear conflict.

Now, it also measures the likelihood of apocalyptic climate change, cyber threats and biosecurity events.

The Doomsday Clock's minute hand did not move in 2016. The metaphorical clock is now the closest it's been to midnight since 1953, when the U.S. and Soviet Union were in the early stages of hydrogen bomb testing.

Nuclear 'Doomsday Clock' Ticks Closest To Midnight In 64 Years

By John Clarke

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Reports: Arrested Russian Intel Officer Allegedly Spied For U.S.

By Doug Stanglin

USA Today, January 26, 2017

A senior Russian intelligence officer and cybersecurity investigator arrested last month on treason charges allegedly was passing information to U.S. intelligence services, according to Russian media outlets.

Sergei Mikhailov, who worked for the FSB, the successor to the KGB, was arrested in December, along with Ruslan Stoyanov, a top manager for Russia's largest cybersecurity firm, according to the economic newspaper Kommersant. Stoyanov was also charged with suspicion of treason.

In addition, two other people, including Major Dmitry Dokuchaev, also an FSB officer, were arrested in connection with the case, according to Russia's REN-TV. The fourth person was not identified.

Stoyanov allegedly developed a program introduced into a prominent bank's computer system to gather privileged information on customers, REN-TV reports. That information, it reports, was then sold to the West.

In another twist, Russian media says the FSB believes Mikhailov tipped U.S. intelligence about Vladimir Fomenko and his server rental company "King Servers." The U.S. cybersecurity company Threat Connect identified King Servers last year as an "information nexus" used by hackers suspected of working for Russian intelligence in cyberattacks on electoral systems in Arizona and Illinois.

The Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta says Mikhailov was arrested during an FSB meeting in early December when officers came into the room, put a bag over his head and took him away.

The cause of the arrests was not clear. The newspaper said only that the FSB discovered Mikhailov's alleged involvement in the purported plot after the U.S. accused King Servers of the cyberattacks on the U.S.

In a wilder twist, a pro-Kremlin television network, Tsargrad TV, claimed Mikhailov "patronized and supervised" an "Anonymous International" group called "Humpty Dumpty" that it said hacked the personal email of Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev and other top Russian officials in 2014.

While more far-fetched, it is perhaps noteworthy Tsargrad TV, which even Novaya Gazeta notes is prone to wild conspiracy theories, would publish such a report during the heated debate in the U.S. over Russia's alleged meddling in the U.S. election. The TV station, for example, suggested "Humpty Dumpty" was a CIA operation, and that with Russian presidential elections coming up in 2018 hacked information could serve "goals ... opposed to national interests."

Top 10 Companies Hiring Cybersecurity Professionals

By Alison DeNisco

TechRepublic, January 26, 2017

We are currently facing a global cybersecurity shortage, according to a recent report from Indeed. Job postings in the cybersecurity field have gone up 74% over the past five years, and a Cisco report estimates that there are currently 1

million unfilled cybersecurity jobs worldwide. Symantec predicts that this shortage will only grow, and that we will see 1.5 million unfilled jobs in the field by 2019.

In the report, Indeed examined demand for cybersecurity professionals across 10 countries. Israel, Ireland, the UK, the US, and Germany were the top five nations with the largest shortages.

The US faces a 33% skills shortage for crucial security roles, the report found. However, the gap appears to be slowly closing: Job seeker interest in cybersecurity roles rose from meeting 60% of employer demand in 2014 to 67% today, based on comparing the number of open cybersecurity roles to the clicks they received from job seekers.

"Part of the reason these roles are so hard to fill is because there simply are not enough job seekers looking to work in these positions," said Indeed economist Daniel Culbertson. "Indeed research has shown that the most in-demand cybersecurity titles consistently do not receive interest from job seekers that is comparable to the number of job postings in the field."

This imbalance between supply and demand means cybersecurity professionals have their choice of strong job prospects and high salaries, the Indeed report noted. "One potential solution for employers could be increased investment, either in current employees or future hires, in education and training to equip workers to fill these roles," Culbertson said.

On Wednesday, Indeed released a list of the best US enterprises with security job openings. The businesses that made the list were the most highly rated on overall employee experience among companies that had at least 20 job postings for cybersecurity roles from October 2016 to December 2016.

Here are Indeed's top 10 US companies hiring cybersecurity professionals.

At the top of the list, Apple has seen several high-profile battles around the privacy and security implications of encryption and iOS—most recently, the New York district attorney's request for the company to return to operating systems that make it easier for law enforcement officials to extract data. It's possible that the company is hiring more cyber professionals to continue bolstering that work in these areas and protecting user data.

Financial organizations tend to be targeted less than institutions with more vulnerable systems, such as schools and hospitals. However, it's important to remain vigilant to protect money and financial data, of course.

At number three, Patient First medical centers are located across the country. Healthcare organizations are particularly vulnerable to cyber attacks such as ransomware, so it makes sense that they would be adding staff in this area.

Global security and aerospace company Lockheed Martin employs approximately 97,000 people worldwide. Since it is involved in the research, development, manufacturing and integration of advanced technology systems and products, the company is likely adding more positions in cybersecurity to protect those offerings.

Auto giant General Motors has made several moves into the connected cars and autonomous cars space in the past year. It invested $500 million into Lyft, in part to work on the company's plans for a driverless car fleet, and purchased Cruise Automation as part of its Autonomous Vehicle Development Team. Connected and autonomous cars pose large security risks to users, so the is probably increasing their staff in that area to address those issues.

In recent years, Capital One has made major investments in emerging technology, including software and big data projects, which require cyber professionals to keep secure. It also holds large amounts of customer financial data.

Cisco has reported that cyber attacks are getting stronger, and has a number of cybersecurity efforts and products in place. As they continue researching the issue, it makes sense that they would add more of their own staff to bolster their products and research initiatives.

As Intel moves further into the Internet of Things (IoT) space with new chips and other devices, it seems that it is looking to bolster security staff to keep those devices from being hacked.

Global security company Northrop Grumman provides systems and products to government and commercial customers. The company invests in research on identity management, cloud security, and supply chain, and is likely adding more staff to ensure high-profile systems are kept secure.

Airplane manufacturer Boeing is experimenting with using next-generation technology: It recently partnered with Microsoft to use the company's AI and big data analytics tools to improve operational efficiency. Boeing is also working with APX Labs and using its Skylight platform to interface with its manufacturing system and work instructions with wearable devices. Therefore, the company will need upgraded security capabilities to keep these tools functioning.

NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis Remains Wary Of Waterboarding

Pentagon says he is committed to upholding Geneva Conventions

By Paul Sonne

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

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Rights Advocates Warn Of Backlash If Trump Pursues Torture

By Paisley Dodds And Lori Hinnant

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

LONDON (AP) – It took more than a year's worth of beatings, sleep deprivation, psychological abuse and threats to his family before former Guantanamo Bay detainee Moazzam Begg said he cracked and confessed to being a member of the al-Qaida terror network. The only problem, he said, was that it was a lie.

It was only a matter of weeks for Mourad Benchellali, a Frenchman detained first at Kandahar in Afghanistan. "Because I was afraid, because I hurt, and because I told myself, when this is all worked out, I'll tell the truth. But for now, better to tell them what they want to hear," he said.

Chris Arendt, a former guard at the U.S. detention facility in Cuba, said he routinely saw what could be defined as torture, including prisoners being unnecessarily pepper-sprayed or taken for interrogations that never happened. Instead, they were left shackled for hours as a means of punishment.

During the year he spent at the U.S. detention facility in 2004, Arendt said it was clear that most of the detainees had relatively little valuable intelligence.

"I thought that if I confessed I would at least get access to the courts and my interrogations would stop being so adversarial," said the 48-year-old Begg, who confessed in 2003 but wasn't released until 2005, along with three other British detainees. Like most Guantanamo detainees, he was never charged.

President Donald Trump is asking for recommendations on whether torture works, if secret CIA black sites should be used again to interrogate suspects and whether the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay should not only stay open, but should accept future detainees, according to a draft executive order that signals sweeping changes to U.S. interrogation and detention policy. The Associated Press and other news organizations obtained a copy.

The draft directive, which the White House said was not official, would reverse President Barack Obama's order to close the Guantanamo Bay facility – a place Trump has said he wants to fill "with bad dudes."

Trump, who has pushed for tougher interrogation techniques, said he would consult with new Defense Secretary James Mattis and CIA director Mike Pompeo before authorizing any new policy. But he said he had asked top intelligence officials: "Does torture work? And the answer was 'Yes, absolutely.'"

"To say that torture works is a bit like saying slavery works as a model of economic production," said Nigel Inkster, former director of operations at Britain's foreign intelligence agency, MI6. "It's not the conversation we ought to be having."

Even if it were, the answer is resoundingly negative, said Mark Fallon, who served as a U.S. counterterrorism investigator and tried to oppose the torture at Guantanamo when he learned about it during the administration of President George W. Bush.

"Torture is a very effective method to get somebody to say something you want them to say. It is not an effective method to get somebody to tell the truth or reliable information," he said.

If the Trump administration resuscitates policies used under the Bush administration, it could jeopardize relations and intelligence sharing between the United States and European allies such as Britain. Prime Minister Teresa May, who is scheduled to meet Trump on Friday, told reporters that Britain "absolutely" condemns the use of torture.

On Thursday, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said the draft order was not a "White House-originated" document, and House Speaker Paul Ryan said it was his understanding that it was written by someone who had earlier worked on the Trump transition team. "This is not something the Trump administration is planning on, working on," Ryan said.

While it's unclear whether the Trump administration will return to policies seen in the war on terror, rights advocates say even the smallest move backward could bring legal troubles, especially with regard to CIA black sites that were used for interrogation.

Binyam Mohamed is a former Guantanamo prisoner who was held at such a site in Morocco.

The British and Ethiopian national was first arrested in Pakistan and then transported to Morocco under the U.S. "extraordinary rendition" program, where he said his penis was sliced with a razor blade. He was then transferred to Guantanamo Bay in 2004 and released in 2009.

Mohamed and other detainees sued the British government for collusion with U.S. authorities, and in 2010, the UK Court of Appeal ruled that he had been subjected to "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by the U.S. authorities." He and others were awarded a compensation settlement in 2011.

"It would become impossible for the UK to share any intelligence that could potentially lead to the mistreatment of anyone," Inkster said. "And I don't think there are many people in Western intelligence who regard Guantanamo as a success."

After the Sept. 11 terror attacks, no two prisons came to symbolize the war on terror like Guantanamo Bay and the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

When the Guantanamo Bay camp opened in January 2002, months after the Sept. 11 attacks, European reporters flocked to the outpost, plastering front pages with the first

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images of terror suspects. The men, clad in orange jumpsuits, were shown kneeling and bound next to U.S. military guards.

More than 900 prisoners have since circled through the prison camp, some held for years without ever being charged. It also attracted a steady stream of controversies, including documents that showed prisoners were subjected to abuse.

The bad press at Guantanamo coincided with graphic pictures of abuse out of Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison.

The 2004 photographs documented a wide array of abuses against prisoners held in U.S. custody there. Prisoners were stripped naked or put in degrading poses. Two photographs showed a female guard holding a leash attached to a prisoner's neck while another hooded prisoner was forced to stand on a box.

Some fear that if Trump embraces past policies, there could be a backlash from extremist groups, increasing the threat of terrorism against the United States. The Islamic State group has often shown prisoners wearing the same orange jumpsuits as Guantanamo detainees.

"Experience has shown that using torture doesn't work; it only grows hatred," said Ewan Watson, a spokesman at the International Committee of the Red Cross. "It sows the seeds of revenge, destroys the social fabric of communities and degrades a society's institutions."

The American Civil Liberties Union warned that if past policies return, the United States could see itself in the middle of a flurry of legal challenges at home and internationally. Torture is prohibited under international law.

"Trump's executive orders bring us back to the dark, lawless days of the Bush administration," said Anthony Romero, executive director of the ACLU. "Black sites, Guantanamo, torture appear to be back on the table as official policy of the U.S. government, even if these actions are known to be unlawful."

Arendt, who was a guard when Begg was in Guantanamo, now works at a tattoo shop in Detroit but is still haunted by his experience.

"If I could deliver a message to Trump it would be: Please stop and look at history. Don't make us a country of concentration camps and black sites," he said. "No good country should have to stoop to this level."

The words "concentration camp" flashed through Nizar Sassi's mind when he found himself in a pile of naked men after being violated in front of a roomful of military physicians in Kandahar. Freed from Guantanamo in 2004, the Frenchman's email address still bears the number he was given at the camp: 325.

"I no longer believe in the justice of man," he said. "I'm not going to torture myself. Hatred that normally should be inked in my heart with what I've endured would finish by destroying me first."

Hinnant reported from Paris.

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ICRC, Jurists' Group Join In Rebuke Of Trump's Torture Remarks, 'Black Site' Reports

By Stephanie Nebehay

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

The Daily 202: Is President Trump Surrendering America's Moral High Ground?

By James Hohmann

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

THE BIG IDEA: Not even a week into Donald Trump's presidency, some liberal internationalists find themselves privately pining for George W. Bush.

Despite acts of brutality that were perpetrated on his watch, Bush always insisted publicly that the United States did not torture. He understood that copping to the enhanced interrogation techniques he had secretly approved could undercut our moral standing on the world stage, provide terrorists a potent recruiting tool and give our enemies an excuse to torture Americans.

Trump doesn't think like that. "I have spoken as recently as 24 hours ago with people at the highest level of intelligence," the new president told ABC News in an interview that aired last night, "and I asked them the question, 'Does it work? Does torture work?' and the answer was, 'Yes, absolutely.'"

Explaining why he wants to reconsider the use of waterboarding, Trump added: "We're not playing on an even field. … As far as I'm concerned, we have to fight fire with fire."

Mike Pompeo was reportedly "blindsided" yesterday when he found out about the draft order to consider reopening black sites and resuming waterboarding. During his recent confirmation hearing, the new CIA director promised senators that he would "absolutely not" resume waterboarding.

Trump's statement is also surprising because Jim Mattis, his new defense secretary, is an outspoken critic of the technique's usefulness. "I've always found, give me a pack of cigarettes and a couple of beers, and I do better with that than I do with torture," he has said.

John McCain, who was tortured by the communists in Vietnam and has as much moral standing on this issue as anyone, promised to hold firm:

– Yes, Bush invaded Iraq without sign-off from the United Nations Security Council. But he tried earnestly to get

it. And he made a big deal about building a coalition of the willing.

Not only is Trump talking about "taking the oil" and eschewing multilateralism, but he is poised to propose a 40 percent reduction in voluntary U.S. support for the U.N. and other global bodies, according to a draft of a forthcoming order obtained by The Post. A separate order would limit U.S. participation in some treaties.

"Trump's new U.N. ambassador, Nikki Haley, has pledged to put U.S. interests first and use the leverage of disproportionate U.S. funding of the body. But the draft order would go much further, and with an apparent goal of slashing U.S. participation across a swath of U.N. agencies and activities to which the Trump administration objects on fiscal or ideological grounds," Juliet Eilperin and Anne Gearan report. "The draft order could reverse or roll back funding for … international peacekeeping missions and U.S. support for development work."

The new team at the State Department is separately conducting a review of all foreign aid doled out during Barack Obama's final months in office, including a controversial release of $220 million to Palestinians just hours before Trump assumed the presidency. The review involves dozens, if not hundreds, of foreign aid allocations, Carol Morello reports.

– After the Sept. 11 attacks, Bush bent over backwards to say that Muslims were not the enemy. U.S. generals relentlessly made the case that we need Muslim allies to battle terrorism. Trump neither thinks nor talks this way.

The new White House says it plans to follow through on the president's promise to begin "extreme vetting" of would-be immigrants. A draft executive order, which Trump could sign today or tomorrow, would block entry to the United States for 30 days for anyone from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Libya and Somalia. It would also bar entry for all refugees for 120 days and for those from Syria indefinitely. "While all are Muslim-majority countries, the list does not include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and numerous other Muslim-majority countries," Abigail Hauslohner and Karen DeYoung report.

Trump's move, while stopping short of a full Muslim ban (which would not survive a constitutional challenge in court), would nonetheless have been outside of mainstream Republican thought until very recently. As Mike Pence tweeted just 13 months ago:

Many nonpartisan experts say Trump's approach will weaken U.S. security. (One example is here.)

Trump scoffs when asked whether his new immigration policies will stoke anger in the Muslim world and motivate Islamic State terrorists. "Anger? There's plenty of anger right now. How can you have more?" Trump asked interviewer David Muir last night. "The world is a mess. The world is as angry as it gets. What? You think this is gonna cause a little more anger? The world is an angry place!"

"A blanket ban would compromise this nation's long-standing position as a sanctuary for desperate and innocent people," the Post's independent Editorial Board argues this morning. "As a backdoor way for Mr. Trump to partially make good on his proposed Muslim ban, it also would be an affront to this country's status as an example of religious tolerance."

– Bush made the promotion of democracy a central aim of U.S. foreign policy. Trump explicitly rejects this doctrine.

"It is the right of all nations to put their own interests first," the new president said during his inaugural address last Friday. "We do not seek to impose our way of life on anyone."

Bush, during his second inaugural, declared: "It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

Irony alert: Yesterday was the sixth anniversary of the start of the Tahrir Square protests in Egypt — "a fleeting moment where it looked as though the Muslim world was tilting toward Western values," Annie Linskey notes on the front page of the Boston Globe.

– Bush had warm relations with Mexico. His first foreign trip, less than a month after taking office, was to San Cristobal for a bilateral sit-down with Vicente Fox. One of 43's deepest regrets remains his failure to achieve comprehensive immigration reform.

Trump is now publicly feuding with the president of Mexico over who will pay for the border wall.

Enrique Peña Nieto reiterated last night that his country will never pony up, under any circumstance. In a video released last night, Peña Nieto said Mexico "offers but also demands respect." And said that the 50 Mexican consulates across the U.S. will "turn into places to defend rights of Mexicans. Where a Mexican needs legal help, they will be there."

The Mexican president is scheduled to come to the White House next week for a bilateral meeting, but he's now under heavy domestic political pressure to cancel the summit. And this morning Trump said, if Mexico won't pay, maybe he shouldn't come:

– If you care about how the U.S. is perceived overseas, this morning's clips are brutal. Here are three representative examples:

– In the Netherlands, a satirist created a fake tourism video to "introduce" Trump to their country using his own style of bombastic language. "It's gonna be a great video," the host promises, before flashing shots of the bucolic countryside. On offer is a large bridge, constructed to keep out the "water from Mexico" (the ocean), as well as a miniature town where the "squares are so small, you don't need people to fill them" (a jab at his inauguration crowd size). The video ends with a semi-serious plea not to "screw NATO," and asks, "If you

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have to keep America first, could you keep the Netherlands second?" Amanda Erickson reports that it's gone viral. Watch it here:

– Other western countries are looking to fill the vacuum being created by America's turn inward. The Dutch government just announced that it wants to help set up an international abortion fund to offset the money that NGOs are going to lose because of Trump reinstating the Mexico City policy. The Dutch development ministry says as many as 20 other nations have indicated that they might support the country's effort, per Rick Noack.

– Outside of Europe, an untold number of our fellow humans – living under despots and longing for self-rule – yearn for the kind of American leadership that Trump feels is too burdensome. Bana al-Abed, the 7-year-old Syrian girl who used her widely-followed Twitter account to chronicle her life in war-torn Aleppo and who has been called the "Anne Frank" of our era, wrote an open letter to President Trump begging him to save her friends. "Can you please save the children and people of Syria?" she writes. "You must do something for the children of Syria because they are like your children and deserve peace like you." (Read more on the letter here.)

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:

– Early this morning, the president called Chelsea Manning a "traitor":

– Trump spent most of his interview with ABC boasting about himself. Jenna Johnson writes up a pretty stunning exchange: "The way President Trump tells it, the meandering, falsehood-filled, self-involved speech that he gave at the [CIA] headquarters was one of the greatest addresses ever given."

"That speech was a home run," Trump told David Muir. "See what Fox said. They said it was one of the great speeches. They showed the people applauding and screaming. … I got a standing ovation. In fact, they said it was the biggest standing ovation since Peyton Manning had won the Super Bowl, and they said it was equal. It lasted for a long period of time."

Four times, the president referred to himself in the third-person. Trump plugged an "extraordinary poll" that he said found that people "loved and liked" his inaugural address, insisted he could have "very, very easily" won the popular vote in the election – which concluded more than 11 weeks ago – had he simply tried. And he said a recent visitor told him that their meeting "was the single greatest meeting I've ever had with anybody."

Crowd size still really matters to the new president: "As the two toured Trump's new home, the president stopped in front of a framed photo of his inauguration crowd. 'Here's a picture of the crowd,' the president explained to the nation he now leads. 'Now, the audience was the biggest ever, but this crowd was massive. Look how far back it goes … And I would actually take that camera and take your time [scanning the crowd] if you want to know the truth.'" (Read the full transcript here.)

THE BORDER WALL IS REALLY HAPPENING:

– In the ABC interview, Trump said construction of the wall will begin within "months." Earlier Wednesday, he signed measures to create more detention centers, add thousands of Border Patrol agents and cut off funds for so-called "sanctuary cities" that shield undocumented immigrants from deportation. "We are going to restore the rule of law in the United States," Trump told a crowd of DHS employees, who applauded several times during his remarks. "Beginning today, the United States gets control of its borders." (David Nakamura)

– Paul Ryan said last night on MSNBC that Congress will front the money for the wall. A financial reimbursement from Mexico will come later, both Trump and Ryan now say. Construction industry analysts have said the total costs of a barrier could approach $20 billion.

– Republican Rep. Will Hurd, whose Texas district includes more miles of U.S.-Mexico border than any other, slammed Trump's announcement as "the most expensive and least effective way to secure the border": "Each section of the border faces unique geographical, cultural, and technological challenges that would be best addressed with a flexible, sector-by-sector approach that empowers the agents on the ground with the resources they need," he said in a statement last night. (Elise Viebeck)

– Here are five other logistical obstacles Trump will face building a border wall, via Kevin Schaul and Samuel Granados: "We drove the entire length of the U.S.-Mexico border — from Brownsville, Tex., to San Diego, with crossings into Mexico scattered throughout — talking to locals and experts about President Trump's promise to build the wall. … Five notable challenges to building the wall that we observed along the journey. 1. The terrain is very rough in some areas. 2. Unlike Arizona, New Mexico and California, most of Texas is privately owned. 3. Most of the border is natural, but a human-made barrier is not. 4. Surveillance makes the barrier effective. 5. Migrants are determined and often have few options."

GET SMART FAST:

The Dow closed above 20,000 for the first time ever. The new high comes as investors bet that Trump can work with Congress to lower taxes and pass more business-friendly policies. (Renae Merle)

Just five weeks after Obama commuted his sentence, an ex-gang member who spent years seeking freedom from prison was "executed" by two masked men at a halfway home. (Avi Selk)

More than 100 vineyards have been decimated in Chile, where the country is suffering its worst forest-fire disaster in history. More than 300,000 acres in the historic wine-growing

region have been destroyed, and the government is pleading with outside countries for funds and assistance to battle the blaze. (Samantha Schmidt)

A Nebraska state senator resigned after he retweeted an offensive post about the Women's March suggesting that protesters were too ugly to be sexually assaulted. In a news conference Wednesday, State Sen. Bill Kintner called himself a "fighter" and insisted he had received an outpouring of support asking him to stay in the legislature. "You won't have Bill Kintner to kick around anymore," he told reporters. (Sarah Larimer)

A comic book lover who won a spot on the San Jose city council said he wanted to bring a moment of levity to a tense political climate – so he was sworn in while brandishing a Captain America shield. (Cleve R. Wootson Jr.)

Germany is shuttering a long-standing law that prohibits its residents from speaking out against foreign heads of state. Officials said the law, which was removed just in time for Trump, is "outdated and unnecessary." (Max Bearak)

Idaho has been pummeled with snow this winter – and officials say the relentless pileup has caused hundreds of buildings to collapse. Some towns have lost their grocery store, their bowling alley, and countless homes to the blustery deluge. And with more snow on the way, residents say they are "terrified." (Katherine Arcement)

Usain Bolt is no longer a nine-time Olympic champion. The Jamaican sprinter was forced to return one of his gold medals after the IOC announced that one of his relay teammates tested positive for a banned substance. (Cindy Boren)

Italy is considering a plan that would require asylum seekers to do mandatory community service. The controversial proposal comes as the country struggles to accommodate the number of migrants that have risked their lives on the perilous Mediterranean Sea voyage. (Anna Momigliano)

An Australian zoo is pleading with residents to catch deadly funnel-web spiders, known for their large fangs and acidic venom, and bring them to the facility alive. They need to milk the live spiders for antivenom, and the entire country is currently at risk of running dry. (Ben Guarino)

A Minnesota police officer is facing potential jail time after a handcuffed 14-year-old girl spit at him – and he responded by punching her in the face, twice. Authorities are probing the violent exchange, but it's unlikely his claim of "self-defense" will hold much water. (Cleve R. Wootson Jr.)

A 25-year-old man says he is lucky to be alive after he went on a backcountry ski trip in Utah and accidently skied off an unmarked 150-foot cliff. Miraculously, he escaped unscathed and managed to capture the whole thing on video. (Marissa Payne)

Modern-day otters are furry, cute, and look more like a small dog than a fearsome, buck-toothed predator. But that wasn't always the case – scientists say a newly-discovered extinct version was the size of a wolf and roamed the swampy, uninhabited wetlands of ancient China. (New York Times)

TRUMP'S VOTER FRAUD FANTASY:

– Why does the president falsely believe that as many as five million voted illegally? The New York Times' Glenn Thrush has the stunning answer: When Trump huddled with top House and Senate leaders at the White House on Monday, he backed up his assertions of rampant voter fraud by citing a vague anecdote from a German golfer who is not eligible to vote in the United States. The witnesses described the story this way: [Bernhard] Langer, a 59-year-old native of Bavaria, Germany … was standing in line at a polling place near his home in Florida on Election Day, the president explained, when an official informed Mr. Langer he would not be able to vote. Ahead of and behind Mr. Langer were voters who did not look as if they should be allowed to vote, Mr. Trump said, according to the staff members — but they were nonetheless permitted to cast provisional ballots. The president threw out the names of Latin American countries that the voters might have come from. … The anecdote, the aides said, was greeted with silence, and Mr. Trump was prodded to change the subject by [Reince Priebus] and [John Cornyn] … In the emerging Trump era, the story was a memorable example, for the legislators and the country, of how an off-the-cuff yarn — unverifiable and of confusing origin — became a prime policy mover for a president whose fact-gathering owes more to the oral tradition than the written word."

– If it's possible that millions of illegal votes were cast, isn't it possible that such massive fraud could have also helped him? No, says Trump. In fact, zero illegal votes were cast for him, he told ABC last night. "Of those votes cast, none of 'em come to me. None of 'em come to me. They would all be for the other side. None of 'em come to me," Trump said. He added later: "Those were Hillary votes." Recall that he won by about 80,00 votes in the three states that mattered. (Philip Bump)

– Sean Spicer suggested during his briefing that the investigation will focus on large states where Trump didn't compete. They wouldn't want to focus on the places he won...

– Oh, and it turns out that multiple Trump staffers, including Steve Bannon and Steven Mnuchin, as well as a first daughter Tiffany, are registered to vote in two states.

– "It is unclear who will investigate," Sari Horwitz and Jenna Johnson report. "The president could set up an independent commission or task force to look into the claims, which have already been disproved by many national studies. White House press secretary Sean Spicer said the president's investigation would examine 'the integrity of our voting system' and not just the 2016 election. The Justice Department, which investigates claims of election crimes, has

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not historically launched a criminal investigation at the request of a president. An attorney general could order an investigation, but Trump's nominee, Sen. Jeff Sessions, has not yet been confirmed, and his spokeswoman declined to comment. Justice officials said they knew nothing about an investigation into voter fraud and referred questions to the White House."

Former assistant attorney general for civil rights Tom Perez called Trump's planned probe a "totally stupid and wasteful investigation into nonexistent problems." "I can't think of a more colossal waste of taxpayer dollars than to initiate this investigation," said Perez, who is now in the running to lead the DNC. "This is all about ego. The issue of in-person voting fraud is virtually nonexistent."

House Oversight Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz said his committee will not join Trump in investigating the so-called fraud: "If he wants to have an investigation, have at it. I just don't see any evidence of it." (CNN)

"I haven't seen any evidence to that effect," said Sen. John Thune, urging Republicans to "focus on legislating."

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

– Trump announced a new team of ethics lawyers, hours after his family business announced it was hiring a longtime GOP lawyer to ensure the Trump Organization minimizes conflict of interest concerns. Drew Harwell and Tom Hamburger report: "At the White House, the team will be led by Stefan C. Passantino, a [former Newt Gingrich adviser] and election-law expert in private practice who will have the title of deputy assistant to the president for compliance and ethics matters." The Trump Organization named veteran GOP lawyer and former Bush adviser Bobby Burchfield to serve as an outside ethics adviser.

– Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Florida doubled its new member initiation fee to $200,000 after the election, prompting criticism that the newly-minted president is already profiting off his power. Drew Harwell reports: "The increase … could boost the revenue of the Palm Beach club Trump has called the 'Winter White House.' It could also directly benefit his private fortune because he has refused to divest his business holdings while in the Oval Office. Since his election victory, Mar-a-Lago has assumed a prized role in Trump's presidency, rivaling Trump Tower as a focal point of his lifestyle and ambitions. [And] the club's deep-pocketed clientele are offered the opportunity to encounter the president when he is relaxing at his vacation home. The club is 'certainly a lot more crowded now that he's president,' [said] Jeff Greene, a Florida billionaire and Mar-a-Lago member ... At a recent dinner, Greene said, the crowds were massive, adding, 'It never used to be that packed.'"

– Trump's sons are looking to capitalize on their dad's presidency by pursuing an ambitious expansion plan across the country. Bloomberg's Hui-Yong Yu and Caleb Melby report: "There are 26 major metropolitan areas in the U.S., and we're in five," Trump Hotels CEO Eric Danziger said after a panel discussion at the Americas Lodging Investment Summit in Los Angeles. "I don't see any reason that we couldn't be in all of them eventually." Having Trump hotels in 26 cities would triple the current total. Danziger, who joined Trump Hotels in August 2015, said that Trump Hotels is considering opening luxury properties in Dallas, Seattle, Denver and San Francisco."

– At least four top staffers in the Trump administration have accounts on an RNC's email server, Newsweek reports, including Kellyanne Conway, Jared Kushner, Sean Spicer and Steve Bannon. It's the same one that the Bush administration was accused of using to evade transparency rules after claiming to have "lost" 22 million emails. It's unclear how or if the staffers are using the account, but the move comes after Trump repeatedly attacked Clinton on the campaign trail for her use of a private email server at the State Department. Now, the new staff risks repeating the same mistake.

– "Wilbur Ross and the Era of Billionaire Rule," by Bloomberg Businessweek's Max Abelson: "Trump's proposed cabinet has a net worth of more than $6 billion. Ross is by far the richest … [and] how he achieved his fortune—a well-known Wall Street tale of 'vulture' investing at its shrewdest—takes on a different cast in light of his nomination. Ross got rich in part with government assistance, taking advantage of bankruptcy laws and tariffs and having others pick up the bill for pensions owed to employees. He's been on both sides of perhaps the most pivotal issue of the 2016 campaign—free trade—depending on how it affected his own wealth. If confirmed as Commerce secretary, as is widely anticipated, Ross would be expected by Trump's electorate to deliver on promises of working-class jobs and an industrial renaissance. Yet he would have the means to continue rewarding the Establishment. Even before taking office, he's pushed policies that would enrich private investors in public projects."

THE REPUBLICAN RETREAT:

– Trump will take his first trip on Air Force One today so he can speak to congressional Republicans at noon in Philadelphia. Mike Pence, flying up separately (because POTUS and VPOTUS never travel on the same aircraft), speaks at 2 p.m.

– Republicans arrived to Philly hoping to forge a game plan to reshape the health-care system and overhaul tax policy, envisioning that their legislation could finally become law after years of facing off with the Obama White House. "Instead, they found themselves in an all-too-common battle, trying to explain, defend and deflect the latest round of controversial statements by Trump," Paul Kane reports. "Any hope that Trump would avoid distracting fights once he entered the Oval Office faded … as several hundred GOP lawmakers loaded onto a rented Amtrak train to head north for a two-day retreat half a mile from Independence Hall.

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Filing down an escalator and onto the platform at Washington's Union Station, House and Senate Republicans smiled and largely avoided questions from the assembled members of the news media … Formally known as the 'Congress of Tomorrow,' the GOP retreat's early steps felt a lot like the campaign of last year."

– Senate Democrats are not allowing reporters to attend their retreat in West Virginia this week. But Politico's Burgess Everett obtained the agenda. Among the planned sessions: "A discussion with Trump voters," "Speaking to those who feel invisible in rural America," "Listening to those who feel unheard," and "Rising America — they feel unheard too."

UNDERSTANDING TRUMPISM:

– Smart frame by Abby Phillip and Ashley Parker: "During the campaign, many of Trump's supporters and even his advisers said they took many of the candidate's most far-reaching promises seriously – but not literally. Now … Trump is showing that at least some of them were indeed meant literally — putting him at odds not only with critics but with some members of his own party. … [But] Trump's moves have alarmed Democrats, some of whom were cautiously optimistic that they could work with Trump as a self-proclaimed non-ideological dealmaker but who now see him fulfilling their worst fears."

– Unlike most Republicans, Trump does not believe in federalism. He has signaled sweeping intervention into the way state and local officials carry out policing, treat immigrants, and run elections – setting off a wave of defiance and apprehensive from some of America's largest cities. Katie Zezima, Wesley Lowery and Jose A. DelReal report: "In an executive order signed Wednesday, Trump directed the Department of Homeland Security to find ways to defund cities and jurisdictions out of step with his immigration priorities. That action — which could cost sanctuary cities … millions of dollars — is the latest in a series of moves where Trump has appeared willing to step on state-level or municipal prerogatives. In the scuffle, U.S. mayors have emerged as key players in the resistance to Trump's agenda. At the center of the sanctuary city debate is a disagreement over whether local police officers should be required to help immigration officials enforce federal immigration laws. Many liberal mayors, including Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and New York City's Bill De Blasio, have argued that requiring local police departments to assist immigration agents with deportations could sow distrust among immigrant populations. It could also discourage undocumented victims or witnesses from coming forward to report crimes."

– Trump – who flew cross-country hundreds of nights during the campaign to sleep in his own bed – spoke to the New York Times' Maggie Haberman about how his new home stacks up to the Trump Tower. "His mornings, he said, are spent as they were in Trump Tower. He rises before 6 a.m., watches television tuned to a cable channel first in the residence, and later in a small dining room in the West Wing, and looks through the morning newspapers … But his meetings now begin at 9 a.m., earlier than they used to, which significantly curtails his television time. Still, Mr. Trump, who does not read books, is able to end his evenings with plenty of television. Mr. Trump's wife, Melania, went back to New York … and so Mr. Trump has the television — and his old, unsecured Android phone, to the protests of some of his aides — to keep him company. 'It's a beautiful residence, it's very elegant,' Mr. Trump said, deploying one of his highest forms of praise."

– "One of the two leading finalists to fill the vacant seat on the Supreme Court, Judge Thomas Hardiman, has a quiet but influential ally in the high-stakes legal drama: Trump's sister," Politico's Shane Goldmacher reports: "Judge Maryanne Trump Barry, who serves with Hardiman on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit, has spoken to her brother in favor of elevating him to the high court … 'Maryanne is high on Hardiman,' said one adviser who has spoken directly with the president about the matter. 'They are regularly sitting together, deciding cases together, participating together in oral arguments,' said appellate lawyer Matthew Stiegler … Stiegler was among those who see Barry's hidden hand behind the steady ascent of Hardiman, who was among the lesser-known judges under consideration."

– A document provided last month to governors offers an early look at the wide array of projects that could be funded under Trump's sweeping infrastructure project. John Wagner scoops: "Projects listed in the document include rehabilitation of some major airports and rail stations, such as Union Station in Washington. It includes highway and bridge projects, such as an overhaul of the Arlington Memorial Bridge in Virginia. And it includes mass-transit projects, such as the proposed Purple Line light-rail system in Maryland. There are also potential overhauls of the nation's air traffic control system, hydroelectric plants and energy grid, as well as ports and waterways." The list comes after the National Governor's Association polled each state for help compiling three to five projects apiece to forward to Trump's team. While there is no dollar figure attached to individual projects on the list, a letter sent by the NGA says the "initial spend" on projects is expected to be $150 billion during 2017, with the effort continuing over additional years.

– Federal agents are reinvestigating dozens of Syrian refugees already in the U.S. after discovering a vetting lapse that allowed some who had potentially negative background information in their files to enter the country. The LA Times' Del Quentin Wilber and Brian Bennett scoop: Agents have not concluded that any of the refugees should have been rejected for entry, but at a minimum would have triggered further investigation. The refugees whose cases are under

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review include one who failed a polygraph test when he applied to work at a U.S. military installation overseas and another who may have been in communication with an Islamic State leader.

– Trump tapped the longtime manager of a private equity fund, Philip Bilden, to be the next secretary of the Navy. He is a former Army captain. (Thomas Gibbons-Neff)

THE RESISTANCE:

– Greenpeace-affiliated protesters were arrested after they scaled a 270-foot construction crane in downtown Washington and unfurled a large banner reading: "Resist." Five protesters spent the day on the arm of the crane, while two chained themselves to the tower, blocking potential arrest efforts by police and preventing the crane operator from reaching the controls. (Peter Hermann and Mandy McLaren)

– "Trump's election may have inspired a birth control boom," Vox's Sarah Kliff reports. IUD insertions have spiked since the election. A new data set found the percent of IUD prescriptions and procedures increased 19 percent between October and December. No similar pattern was observed at the end of 2015.

– An anonymous group of people claiming to be National Park Service employees created a Twitter account using the agency's official logo and unleashed on the Trump administration for "muzzling" federal workers, Darryl Fears and Kayla Epstein report. The move comes after the White House barred the federal agencies from speaking to the press and public through social media.

– D.C. officials warned that Washington could lose millions – or even billions – in annual federal assistance following Trump's order to crack down on sanctuary cities and limit their funding. Aaron C. Davis, Peter Jamison and Fenit Nirappil report: "[Budget officials] said the use of the word 'funds' could include a wide range of federal assistance to the city, including even $2.5 billion in annual Medicaid contributions, or roughly 20 percent of the city's total annual spending." Still, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser said the District would remain a sanctuary city, even as she said the impact to the city remained entirely unclear.

MORE ON HOW THE WORLD IS GRAPPLING WITH TRUMP:

– When British Prime Minister Theresa May travels to the White House to meet Trump on Friday, the two will have much in common to discuss, Griff Witte and Anne Gearan report. "Yet beneath the similarities lie profound differences in style and substance that make the two leaders less the second coming of the Thatcher-Reagan transatlantic lovefest and more a geopolitical odd couple. May is everything that Trump is not: a careful, low-key and pragmatic member of the political establishment with a decades-long career in elective office. She holds mainstream positions on critical issues such as trade and security [and] prizes the NATO military alliance and holds skeptical views of Russia — uncertain ground with Trump. Whether those differences dominate their meeting or they manage to bond over their shared circumstances, this could be a critical moment for both leaders."

May probably has more to gain or lose from the visit, experts say. But the diplomacy will be "exceptionally tricky": "She cannot afford to antagonize the famously thin-skinned Trump, because she needs his support for a trade deal. But if she does not challenge him, said [London politics professor Tim Bale], then 'she'll be seen to be sucking up to someone who shouldn't be sucked up to and who can't be relied upon. That could backfire at home, and it could do damage to her relations with other European leaders."

– The Japanese remain wary about the future under Trump – but they have taken a far more immediate liking to the new first daughter. Anna Fifield reports from Tokyo: Ivanka Trump is widely revered as the "perfect woman" in the highly patriarchal society, and the popularity of her brands has skyrocketed as women wonder, breathlessly, how the put-together mother and career woman seems to have it all." "She is a good example that a woman can do an outstanding job and handle a misogynist father like Trump, without pushing too much of a feminist agenda or confronting men too much," said one blogger in Japan. "That is something that Japanese women want but have a hard time doing in a still male-dominated society."

– Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem, the Times of Israel reports. In a statement, Netanyahu's office said Giuliani delivered a "personal message" from Trump to the prime minister, in anticipation of their scheduled meeting in early February.

– The Post's Ishaan Tharoor calls Trump "the U.S.'s first Latin American president": "If it weren't clear before the inauguration, it certainly is now: Trump's presidency represents a radical departure from the norms of American politics. Yet to observers elsewhere, Trumpism feels deeply familiar. Trump may want to stop the flow of migrants and goods from south of the border, but he has imported a political style ingrained in Latin American politics: that of the nationalist demagogue. A number of Latin American analysts have suggested over the past year that it's useful to view Trump through the lens of the 'caudillo,' or strongman. It's a tradition that extends from the last days of Simón Bolivar, South America's great liberator, to the current bluster of leaders … Sure, Trump is no military despot like Chile's late Augusto Pinochet … nor is he a defiant autocrat like the late Hugo Chávez … But to those who have lived under such leaders, it feels like Trump has been taking notes."

PALLING AROUND WITH ASSAD:

– Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii met with President Bashar al-Assad during her secret trip to Syria last week and, now that she's returned, is downplaying his responsibility for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of

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civilians. "Whatever you think about President Assad, the fact is that he is the president of Syria," she told CNN's Jake Tapper last night. "In order for any possibility of a viable peace agreement to occur, there has to be a conversation with him." She added that the Syrians she met with told her there are "no moderate rebels" in the country.

– Journalists following the Syria story closely are stunned by what they see as her breathtaking naiveté:

(Gabbard's office has refused to say who paid for her trip…)

– Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Illinois) ripped his colleague hard:

– Leading establishment Democrats also expressed disgust:

An Obama administration alumnus:

The head of the Center for American Progress:

A former adviser to Hillary Clinton and John Kerry:

– Why the blowback matters: Gabbard is one of the most hyper-ambitious members of Congress. She resigned as a vice chair of the DNC last year so she could support Bernie Sanders, which many in Hawaii's political class perceived as a strategically-motivated play to position herself for a future statewide run.

THERE'S A BEAR IN THE WOODS:

– Russia is winning so much that they're going to get tired of winning. Steven L. Hall retired from the Central Intelligence Agency in 2015 after 30 years. Most of Hall's career was spent abroad, running covert operations in the countries of the former Soviet Union and the former Warsaw Pact. He writes in a piece for The Cipher Brief: "The list of wins for the Russians in the wake of the hacks, despite the fact that in the end, they have been found out, is significant. While there may be even more benefits down the road, a brief tally gives a general sense for how well the Russians have done." Four examples:

Disruption of the American political system: "Disrupting the U.S. is usually Putin's default setting (see also: Syria), because Putin believes that which weakens the U.S., usually strengthens Russia. Remember, Putin views democracy as an existential threat to his regime, and the more distracted the U.S. is with internal political matters, the less it will be fomenting color revolutions and attempting to unseat dictators (e.g. Assad). Cracks in the U.S. political system – especially in a bedrock piece of it like elections – also plays to a favorite Kremlin theme, namely that democracy is a fatally flawed, hypocritical system, and that autocracies, such as Russia's or China's, are no worse, and in many ways better."

Disrupting and discrediting the U.S. intelligence system: "It is difficult to imagine Putin himself doing a better job of scripting what Trump has said about the U.S. Intelligence Community in the wake of the hacks. … This is a win on two levels for Putin. First … Russians always believe that U.S. intelligence enjoys much more political power than it really does. So Putin probably believes the CIA, NSA, and FBI have been badly hobbled, and their influence with the White House seriously eroded. Second, on an emotional level, it must please the former KGB officer in Putin to see his arch enemies take hits from the incoming president. Morale, the Kremlin probably assumes, must be low inside U.S. intelligence. This can only be good for Russia."

Recognition of Russia as an equal, at least on cyber: "It is worth recalling that a great deal of what drives Russian foreign policy is Putin, and Russia's need to feel they are strategic players on the world stage. … Search on your computer how many times senior Russian officials use terms like 'respecting Russia' and 'Russia is a great power.'"

Intense American focus on the hack, not the larger influence operation: "The hacking of the DNC, as well as other targets in the U.S., has caused a great dust storm of media and public attention on all things cyber, which is excellent news for the other, arguably more important parts of the much larger Russian influence operation."

– Mike Rounds of South Dakota is going to play an important role in one of the Senate's two Russia investigations. From Karoun Demirjian: "In the next week or two, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) said, his committee will launch its official investigation into how best to deter and counteract cyber-threats posed by countries such as Russia. He plans to do so with at least one full committee hearing. … Following that, at an undetermined point in the future, the plan is to hand off the day-to-day of that investigation to the head of a new cyber-security subcommittee."

Backstory: Lindsey Graham was supposed to chair this new subcommittee. BUT it would have been his third gavel, so under the conference rules he'd need to get a waiver from GOP leadership. They might not have wanted to give someone willing to criticize the president a bigger platform to highlight Trump's links to Russia. So McCain is giving the spot to Rounds, but he's also giving himself a spot on the subcommittee.

Rounds will not have a free hand: In an interview with Karoun, Rounds said he has confidence in the new administration because of James Mattis as Pentagon chief. Rounds also said that he is "not looking for a fight" with the Trump administration, but added that he is prepared "to go wherever the information takes us," promising "we're going to get results."

The obscure South Dakotan has lobbied for cyber security responses in relatively quiet anonymity, but his signature mark in the arena is the current law, passed as part of a massive defense bill last year, insisting the Pentagon define when a cyber breach or attack constitutes an act of war. "His goal now is to craft policy describing what to do in the event of a cyber attack," Karoun reports. "He would not outline his ideal terms, pledge to fully publicize the results or

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endorse new sanctions on Russia. … But Rounds said that would-be hackers and adversaries should understand there will be 'serious repercussions' for anyone trying in the future to interfere with an election through cyberspace."

SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:

First, Lindsey Graham made an #alternativefacts joke:

He was referring to this Onion item:

Meanwhile, Nikki Haley posted an upbeat photo:

Shelley Moore Capito got a written response from Trump on miners' issues:

After Trump promised an investigation into his baseless claims of voter fraud, Ohio's Republican Secretary of State tweeted this:

– The Leading Authorities speaker's bureau deleted marketing materials from its website that advertised joint paid appearances featuring Clinton manager Robby Mook and Trump manager Corey Lewandowski. The firm said the material had been generated by their own team, not Mook or Lewandowski, and said the two "want to be clear they have not teamed up." (Buzzfeed)

Robby announced he will no longer work with Leading Authorities:

Scientists are preparing their own march on Washington:

Word is spreading among lawmakers:

Many are monitoring tweets suddenly deleted by federal agencies:

Democrats are using the hashtag #NoBanNoWall in response to Trump's immigration orders:

Was the Department of Defense trolling Trump with this tweet?

Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, who could make Trump's life miserable if he ever turned on him, wants the president to do more to cooperate with the oversight that his committee does. Grassley was famously one of the few Republican senators to actually do oversight of the executive branch during the Bush years:

But then the senator clarified that he was not really making a threat, just a plea:

Finally, Al Franken spoke for all Minnesotans when he honored the late Mary Tyler Moore:

Susan Collins also offered condolences:

GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

– What prompted Trump's war with CNN? New York Magazine's Gabriel Sherman reports that there may be a personal dimension at play: "… Trump has told White House staffers that he feels personally betrayed by CNN chief Jeff Zucker. Trump complains that Zucker should be programming CNN more favorably toward him because of their long relationship, which can be traced back to 2004 when Zucker put The Apprentice on NBC. Trump has also said … Zucker owes him because Trump helped get him the job at CNN. According to CNN sources, Trump's claim that he assisted Zucker in landing the top job at the network is false. Trump seems to have gotten the idea because he praised Zucker to Turner Broadcasting's then-CEO Phil Kent at a charity dinner in the fall of 2012, a few months before CNN hired Zucker. But CNN sources say Turner had already decided to hire Zucker ... 'This is entirely personal,' one CNN high-level source said. 'Trump thinks just because he's known Jeff that CNN should be covering him like Fox News does.'"

– Bloomberg Businessweek, "The Upstarts: How Uber, Airbnb, and the Killer Companies of the New Silicon Valley Are Changing the World," by Brad Stone: "In January 2009 the three founders of a little-known website called Airbedandbreakfast.com decided at the last minute to attend the inauguration of Barack Obama. [They] were all in their mid-20s and had no tickets to the festivities, or winter clothes, or even a firm grasp of the week's schedule. But they saw an opportunity … By day [the founders] passed out AirBed & Breakfast fliers at the Dupont Circle Metro station. 'Rent your room! Rent your room!' they cried to the bundled-up commuters, who mostly ignored them. At night they met other AirBed & Breakfast hosts in the city, talked their way into inaugural parties, and answered multiple e-mails from a disgruntled customer—the guest in the basement bedroom. In a barrage of complaints, she said she was certain she smelled marijuana, that the juice she'd left in the fridge had been taken, and that the house didn't comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. At one point she threatened to call the police. Chesky, Gebbia, and Blecharczyk sat just a few feet above her head, typing out apologetic replies …"

DAYBOOK:

Are you a federal employee? Lisa Rein is taking your questions about the hiring freeze during a live chat at 10:30 a.m. Click here to submit questions and see her answers.

At the White House: Trump receives his daily briefing, travels to Philadelphia to meet with Republican lawmakers on retreat, returns to Washington to meet with Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas) – the two guys taking point on tax reform – and then signs an executive order, presumably on immigration.

On Capitol Hill: The Senate and House are out for the rest of the week. Senate Democrats are at a closed-press retreat in West Virginia, and Republicans from both chambers are doing a joint retreat in Philly.

British Prime Minister Theresa May will address members of Congress at the retreat before traveling to Washington to meet with Trump on Friday.

Congress is out for the rest of the week, but the confirmation process for Trump's Cabinet will continue apace next week:

Rex Tillerson, nominated for secretary of state, will receive a vote on the Senate floor at 5:30 p.m. Monday.

Linda McMahon, nominated to lead the Small Business Administration, will receive a vote in the Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship on Monday.

Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), nominated for attorney general, will receive a vote in the Senate Judiciary Committee at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday

Betsy DeVos, nominated for education secretary, will receive a vote in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions at 10 a.m. Tuesday.

Elaine Chao, nominated for transportation secretary, will receive a vote on the Senate floor at 12:20 p.m. on Tuesday.

NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

– Some possible A.M. showers and a windy afternoon ahead, per today's Capital Weather Gang forecast: "There is a decent chance for a shower or two around the morning commute. The showers depart quickly as much drier air comes pouring in behind the cold front that marks the end of our mild spell. Winds steadily pick up the pace reaching 10-20 mph, gusting to 35 mph by midday. Temperatures struggle to go up much but, given that they start as a relatively high point, mid-to-upper 50s are still achievable through early afternoon, before starting to descend."

– Another Virginia school board has declined to move forward with policies that would affirm protections for LGBT students or employees. From Moriah Balingit: "The Loudoun County School Board voted down two measures that would have clarified that employees are protected from discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The school system is the third in Northern Virginia to delay or decline to add LGBT protections, pointing to pending litigation that has left the law unclear, including a lawsuit before the U.S. Supreme Court in which a transgender boy sued a Virginia school board for the right to use the boys' bathroom. … The Fairfax County School Board halted an effort to add regulations to its anti-discrimination policy in July to sort out legal issues regarding the regulations. The Prince William County School Board voted in September to postpone a vote on a measure to extend protections to transgender students and staff until June 2017."

– After Democrats carried Virginia for three presidential elections in a row, Republicans in the state House are pushing a bill that would end the familiar "winner take all" system of awarding electoral votes and replace it with a system to award them by congressional district. In 2016, Hillary won 49.8 percent of Virginia's popular vote but all of its 13 electoral votes. Had those votes been allocated by congressional district instead, Clinton would have received only 7 while Trump got 6. (Chris Ingraham)

– Jazz Lewis, a former campaign director to Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.) who was Maryland political director for Clinton's 2016 campaign, was nominated to succeed former state delegate Michael L. Vaughn in the state's General Assembly. Lewis was chosen by the Prince George's County Democratic Central Committee after a packed, hours-long meeting. (Arelis Hernandez)

VIDEOS OF THE DAY:

NASA astronauts are getting a new spacesuit:

Trump and Kim Jong-Un impersonators kissed and made up in Hong Kong:

Bad Lip Reading took on the inauguration, and the results are great:

Seth Meyers took a closer look at Trump's voter fraud claims:

Meyers interviewed Ta-Nehisi Coates on his article about Obama:

Jimmy Kimmel took on "alternative facts":

Andy Cohen wants Kellyanne Conway to join the Real Housewives franchise:

The Post remembered Mary Tyler Moore:

This monster sinkhole nearly swallowed a pickup truck:

Mexicans in the border town of Reynosa are perhaps predictably nonplussed by Trump's wall proposal:

Blacklisting Muslim Brotherhood Carries Risks

Trump administration taking radically different approach than Obama, Bush; designation could trigger unexpected consequences

By Yaroslav Trofimov

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Guantánamo Awaiting Trump Administration Order

By Carol Rosenberg

Miami Herald, January 26, 2017

The detention center spokesman said Thursday that Guantánamo has functional cell space for perhaps 200 new captives and the 1,650 staff now responsible for 41 prisoners could accommodate them "pretty quickly."

With a dwindled detainee population of just 41 war on terror prisoners, the detention center spokesman said Thursday that Guantánamo has functional cell space for perhaps 200 new captives.

No new orders have arrived from the White House or Pentagon in the first week of the Trump administration, although spokesman Navy Capt. John Filostrat said commanders are studying how to add new captives should the new president make good on his pledge to "load it up with some bad dudes."

How fast could they take in those 200 new prisoners, he was asked by a knot of reporters making the first Detention Center Zone visit of the Donald J. Trump administration.

"Pretty quickly," Filostrat replied, declining to elaborate.

"I have no further instructions," he added. "We're doing our job, holding them safely and humanely until we're told to transfer them or take more."

MORE NEWS: What will President Trump do with Guantánamo?

Filostrat called the guards' housing "substandard," continuing a command campaign to build new barracks. But there was no talk of needing additional soldiers beyond the 1,650 staff of troops and civilians, including around 100 Navy medical personnel who in the past have managed tube feedings of hunger strikers. No new protests have emerged among the 41 captives, he added. "Our detainees are highly compliant."

No prisoners were in sight during an hour-long drive around the zone where some troopers were out for an afternoon jog past a sign declaring "Personal Courage" the value of the week. At the Camp 6 prison complex, a U.S. Navy ambulance driver was offering an orientation tour to a fellow sailor.

And on the road linking the prison area to the base itself, a young soldier or sailor was headed back to the Detention Center Zone on foot, toting a skateboard.

MORE NEWS: Final Obama transfer leaves 41 prisoners at Guantánamo Bay

In the absence of additional instructions, the Pentagon announced a new hearing of the Periodic Review Board, the parole-style panel set up by the Obama administration to decide if any of the "forever prisoners" could be approved for rehabilitation or resettlement.

"We've gotten no guidance on the PRB," Filostrat said, adding that the role of the prison is to "get detainees to the location" — a double-wide trailer in a rusted and mostly abandoned section of Camp Delta.

As of this week there are 26 indefinite detainees, captured from around the world. Another 10 have been charged at the war court, military commissions, and five are approved for transfer with security assurances that satisfy Secretary of Defense James Mattis.

The Obama administration had intended to transfer all cleared captives but in the end left the five behind, including some men for whom the State Department could not make repatriation and resettlement arrangements.

See the Herald's Guantánamo Global Capture Guide

Trump Admin Pursues Rethinking Of National Security Policy

By Eric Tucker

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – President Donald Trump is embracing the idea of Guantanamo Bay as a jail for terror suspects, a repudiation of the Obama administration's longtime push to prosecute captured militants in the U.S. court system.

A draft order spelling out a tougher line in the fight against terror dramatically rethinks how the U.S. should detain, monitor and prosecute terrorist suspects. It would reverse Obama's efforts to close the military detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and reopen the idea of establishing CIA detention facilities outside the United States.

In its support of Guantanamo the document is likely to renew a debate, which the Obama administration considered closed, about whether military tribunals offshore or civilian trials in American courts offer a fairer and more efficient path to justice.

"To take a step backward would be both practically misguided and morally indefensible," said Eric Freedman, a constitutional law professor at Hofstra University and a legal consultant for Guantanamo detainees.

"The United States, for better or worse, sets an example for governments and social movements alike throughout the world, and it's already the case that the groups opposed to American values have made extraordinarily effective use of Guantanamo and its betrayal of American values," Freedman said.

Though the draft order, which the White House said was not official, takes a more expansive view of national security power, it also in some instances relies on legal authorities that remained in place during the Obama administration but went unused.

Guantanamo was open for the duration of the Obama administration, leaving it available for use by a new administration. And though Obama opted not to indefinitely detain newly captured suspects, courts have recognized the government's authority to keep without trial suspects captured during wartime and connected to specific terror groups like al-Qaida.

"The authorities are still there, and there's no legal reason why it wouldn't be available to a President Trump," said Stephen Vladeck, a national security law professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

Aspects of the draft order weren't surprising given Trump's campaign promise to fill Guantanamo with "bad dudes." His pick for attorney general, Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, said at his confirmation hearing that he thought the prison, opened to take terror suspects after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, had served its purpose "marvelously well."

Support for it now represents a total reversal of eight years of efforts to close it. The Obama administration sent no new detainees there, and while not fulfilling a promise to close it, whittled the population from 242 to 41.

Obama's Justice Department maintained that the U.S. civilian court system was the most legally sound forum in which to prosecute terror suspects captured in the U.S. and

overseas and cited hundreds of convictions in New York and other cities as proof.

Former Attorney General Eric Holder sought unsuccessfully in 2009 to move the suspected ringleader of the Sept. 11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, from Guantanamo to New York for trial, and though the plan was derailed by political opposition, has since expressed vindication as the military tribunal system at Guantanamo stalled.

The son-in-law of Osama bin Laden, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, was convicted in New York in 2014 on terror-related charges after being captured in Jordan. Ahmed Abu Khattalah, accused in the deadly 2012 attacks on a State Department compound in Benghazi, was captured in Libya in 2014 and is awaiting trial in Washington, D.C. And despite occasional objections from congressional Republicans, the Justice Department in the Obama administration has consistently used American courts to try suspects captured in the U.S. – including Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and the man accused in the Manhattan and New Jersey bombings last year.

Sessions and other Republicans have long expressed concern that civilian courts afford legal protections to which suspected terrorists are not entitled. He has warned that valuable intelligence can be lost if a detainee is advised of his right to remain silent and to have a lawyer. But in several major cases, federal officials have used a public safety exemption to interrogate for intelligence purposes high-value suspects, including Tsarnaev, before advising them of their Miranda rights and restarting the questioning.

Arguments that Guantanamo is a better forum than civilian courts have been "debunked by successful prosecution after successful prosecution," Todd Hinnen, who served as acting assistant attorney general for national security in the Obama Justice Department, said before the new draft order was announced.

"As a result, sending them before a less well-established, less tested system that's viewed as less legitimate by much of the world, would be a step backward," Hinnen said.

But Robert Turner, a national security law professor at the University of Virginia, disagreed, saying the military tribunal process has fewer "theatrics" that accompany a civilian court case, where a "fast-talking lawyer" could come in and mislead the jury. The tribunal process, he said, has "no-nonsense rules."

"I don't think Gitmo as a detention facility, per se, is one of the problems," he said.

Still, said Vladeck, the draft document lacked enough "teeth" and specifics for the public to know how much of its agenda could actually be implemented or survive inevitable statutory and political hurdles.

"Morally it's a terrifying document, but legally, I think it's mostly a lot of hot air," he said.

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Airport Shooter Indicted On Murder Charges, Faces Death Possible Death Penalty

By Jay Weaver

Miami Herald, January 26, 2017

Fort Lauderdale airport shooter Esteban Santiago told federal agents after carrying out his deadly rampage that he was "hearing voices," under "government mind control" and "participating in jihadi chat rooms online" — but, at least for now, he's not being charged with a terrorist act.

A federal grand jury on Thursday returned an indictment that includes no accusation that he was supporting a foreign terrorist group like the Isamic State, as he suggested to FBI agents. They have found no evidence on his computer, smart phone or elsewhere to support his claims in a confession-like statement.

Instead, the grand jury charged the 26-year-old military veteran from Alaksa with killing five people and injuring six others during the Jan. 6 shooting at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport — with all of the violent attack captured on surveillance video cameras. The 22-count indictment is similar to the complaint filed along with his arrest three weeks ago.

The grand jury also adopted "special findings" to seek the death penalty for Santiago's multiple murders, but that decision will ultimately rest with the U.S. attorney general. If capital punishment were dropped as an option, the New Jersey-born and Puerto Rico-raised Santiago would still face a life prison sentence.

His arraignment is scheduled for Monday in Fort Lauderdale federal court.

Santiago "committed the offense after substantial planning and premeditation to cause the death" of five elderly people who traveled to Fort Lauderdale to go on cruises, read the indictment filed by prosecutors Rick Del Torro and Lawrence LaVecchio.

Judicial Watch, a Washington-based conservative legal group, issued a news release last week that highlighted the recent testimony of an FBI agent during Santiago's detention hearing in Fort Lauderdale federal court. The agent said that after the shooting, Santiago said he had communicated with Islamic terrorists in "jihadi chat rooms" and committed the murders on behalf of the Islamic State.

But the Miami Herald has learned that since the attack, FBI agents have been investigating Santiago's social-media sites and questioning witnesses from South Florida to Puerto Rico and Alaska — and they have uncovered no compelling evidence to support Santiago's statement that he carried out the assault in the name of the Islamic State or any other terrorist group.

Former federal prosecutors following the case said that while Santiago may have mental health issues that triggered the deadly assault, it made no sense for the U.S. attorney's office to pursue terrorism charges based soley on his statements.

"If you promise too much, and you can't deliver, you lose credibility with the jury, especially if you're going to pursue a death penalty case," said Miami lawyer David Weinstein, former chief of the counterterrorism section at the U.S. attorney's office.

Miami lawyer Allan Kaiser, a former veteran of the office, said "you have to play your strongest hand. There's no reason to bring the terrorism charge when you already have a strong case."

Santiago had been living in Anchorage before purchasing a one-way ticket to Fort Lauderdale to carry out the apparently random shooting. He told agents that he planned it, checking in only one bag containing the murder weapon and ammunition.

Agents have discovered that Santiago, a former National Guardsman who did a tour of duty in the Iraq War, had a recent history of domestic violence and mental-health issues. He approached the FBI in Anchorage in November to tell them that he was hearing voices urging him to join the Islamic State. He also told agents he was under the mind control of the CIA.

The FBI referred Santiago to the Anchorage police, which recommended a psychiatric evaluation by state mental-health experts. "He was deemed to be stable," FBI Speical Agent Michael Ferlazzo said at the detention hearing last week.

Anchorage police confiscated his handgun in November but then returned it to him last month after he asked for it. The firearm was the same weapon Santiago is suspected of using in the Fort Lauderdale airport shooting.

However, so far, agents don't believe Santiago was radicalized by extreme Islamist propaganda on the internet, according to sources familiar with the investigation. Instead, they are still trying to figure out what caused him to snap.

Trump Poised To Seek New Military Options For Defeating IS

By Lolita C. Baldor

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – President Donald Trump is expected to ask the Pentagon for ways to accelerate the fight against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria, and officials said the options probably would include steps the Obama administration considered but never acted on, from adding significantly more U.S. troops to boosting military aid to Kurdish fighters

Trump's visit Friday to the Defense Department's headquarters will start the conversation over how to fulfill his inauguration address pledge to eradicate radical Islamic terrorism "completely from the face of the Earth."

Among the possible options are sending in more Apache helicopters and giving the U.S. military broader authority to make routine combat decisions, according to current and former U.S. officials familiar with the ongoing discussions.

The officials weren't authorized to publicly discuss internal deliberations and spoke on condition of anonymity.

As a candidate and now president, Trump has never articulated a detailed plan for defeating IS, and his thoughts on a strategy are murky.

He has railed against the trillions of dollars that America's post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost. But he suggested at one point that he would have "no choice" but to exponentially expand the Obama administration's limited footprint of American forces fighting the militants.

There are about 5,160 U.S. troops in Iraq now, about 100 fewer than the maximum cap. There are no more than 503 in Syria.

In a Republican primary debate last March, Trump raised the prospect of needing 20,000 to 30,000 troops to "knock out" IS.

It's unlikely that military commanders would push for many thousands of additional troops in Iraq. While the Iraqis have asked for more help, a large U.S. military presence could unsettle the fragile, U.S.-allied government.

One possible option in Syria is sending an Army brigade to help retake IS headquarters of Raqqa, according to the officials. Military planners have discussed that option during previous reviews, and could give it to Trump so he has the widest array of possible changes.

The idea always involved the U.S. handing off authority to a local council or group to govern liberated areas, but military commanders never endorsed or recommended the proposal in the past.

More likely could be new ways to enhance the abilities of the U.S.-backed Syrian Kurds, known as the YPG. They have been the most effective force against IS in northern and eastern Syria.

American support is sensitive.

NATO ally Turkey considers the group a terrorist organization. But the YPG forms the main force to retake Raqqa and some in the Pentagon have suggested giving the

Kurds heavy weapons, including rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and heavy combat vehicles. The idea never made it through debate in President Barack Obama's National Security Council.

Military commanders have said they're prepared to give the Trump White House a broad range of options. Many will involve expanding existing efforts to train, advise and enable local Iraqi and Syrian forces. Increased intelligence and surveillance are options, as is allowing U.S. troops to embed more frequently with Iraqi soldiers near the front lines.

The Pentagon also would like more freedom to make daily decisions in how it fights the enemy.

The Obama administration often forced military leaders to seek permission for tactical combat decisions, frustrating commanders. One example, according to a senior official, involved the use, placement and staffing of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System – a highly lethal and effective rocket launcher used in Iraq. Commanders would like greater authority to decide when and how to use the weapon.

Military leaders hope for less micromanagement from the White House, but there is an expectation the Trump administration may set new parameters for the military to work within.

At the Pentagon on Friday, Trump planned to host a formal swearing-in ceremony for Defense Secretary James Mattis, a retired Marine general. The president also was to meet privately with Mattis and military leaders in what's called the Tank – the Joint Chiefs of Staff's secure conference room.

One big decision Trump will have to address is whether to keep fighting IS primarily through local forces or upending the strategy by assuming a greater U.S. leadership role through more forces on the ground.

A wild-card to all the planning is Trump's desire for closer counterterrorism coordination with Russia.

In Syria, the Obama administration and the Russians backed two opposing sides in the nation's civil war. But that conflict has slowed since Russia helped Syria's government oust rebels from the city of Aleppo. Direct negotiations between the government and rebels took place this week for the first time in years.

It's unclear, however, how much Washington and Moscow can cooperate.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, has talked about improving high-level military contact but hasn't advocated military cooperation or joint operations in Syria.

Even intelligence-sharing with Moscow faces legal hurdles. Current law prohibits military cooperation and U.S. officials worry about America being held responsible if a Russian airstrike kills civilians.

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UN Aid Chief Accuses Syria Of Blocking Help To Neediest

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

UNITED NATIONS (AP) – The U.N. humanitarian chief is accusing the Syrian government of blocking aid to hundreds of thousands of the country's neediest people despite a nationwide cease-fire that has given "a glimmer of hope" that the conflict might be coming to an end.

Stephen O'Brien told the Security Council on Thursday that a two-step approval process that the government agreed to for humanitarian convoys "has become, in practice, a 10-step process."

He said the result is that only one convoy delivered aid to 6,000 people in December, when the U.N. sought to help 930,250 people. So far in January, he said, a single convoy reached 40,000 people.

O'Brien urged council members with influence to pressure the Syrian government to allow aid deliveries to all besieged and hard to reach areas.

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Bana Al-Abed Writes Trump: 'Please Save The Children And People Of Syria'

By Megan Specia

New York Times, January 26, 2017

"You must do something for the children of Syria," reads the note, scrawled in pencil on white lined paper in childlike handwriting.

Seven-year-old Bana al-Abed and her mother, Fatemah, posted an open letter to President Trump on Bana's Twitter account on Wednesday, sharing the message with the hundreds of thousands of users who follow the account.

The page-long letter asks the new president to "please save the children and people of Syria."

Bana first captured global attention when she and her mother created a Twitter account, @AlabedBana, that posted near-daily updates on their life in opposition-held Eastern Aleppo and condemned the government's role in the violence.

The photos and videos from inside the city offered a rare glimpse into life in a war zone, and revealed the

struggles faced by a family under siege. Bana and her family are now living in Turkey, after fleeing Aleppo in December.

Some, however, have questioned whether Bana actually wrote the Twitter posts herself and if the videos in which she speaks were rehearsed or altered. And supporters of the government of President Bashar al-Assad assailed her as a fraud and a propaganda tool.

After her family's arrival in Turkey, they visited President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara and she was photographed being hugged by Mr. Erdogan.

Fatemah told The New York Times that her request to Mr. Trump was a simple one: "Look to the children in Syria like your children."

She said Bana regularly hears news about Mr. Trump and felt it was time to try to get his attention.

"Donald Trump is now president. He can do something for the people, especially in conflict zones," Fatemah said. "And all the world had their opinions about this. And this was our opinion, me and Bana."

Fatemah said the note was intended to urge Mr. Trump to change his stance on Syrian refugees. She wrote it ahead of an expected executive order that would cut the country's refugee resettlement program and toughen immigration restrictions for people from a number of predominantly Muslim countries, including Syria.

Despite Mr. Trump's repeated remarks on tightening restrictions against Muslims entering the United States, Fatemah said she believed that someday his views may change.

"Maybe he will change his mind, I don't know," Fatemah said. "But we will keep hoping."

The First Train To Cross Aleppo In Years Traverses An Urban Wasteland

By Louisa Loveluck

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

Hundreds of passengers rode the train back into the Syrian city of Aleppo this week, four years after the area's railway tracks were silenced by war.

Gliding toward the Old City, they peered out across the formerly rebel-held eastern districts, shattered beyond recognition and now under government control.

That urban sprawl was the Syrian rebels' most important stronghold. Its recapture by forces- loyal to President Bashar al-Assad will probably be seen as the defining victory in Syria's almost six-year war.

The train crossed a front line that divided families for years. Passengers held up their cellphones for much of the journey, astonished at the extent of the damage, according to a photographer for the Agence France-Presse news agency who was in one of the carriages.

Aleppo's railway depot has a history of welcoming the displaced. In the years before World War II, it was an important stop for Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany.

In photographs from the city's east, it is now hard to find a building untouched by the furious government bombardment that decided the showdown in December.

The United Nations said at least 40,000 people had returned to the area, with more families arriving every day. The organization has allocated $19 million in emergency aid for the returnees. As winter temperatures bite, entire neighborhoods are without power or running water.

It will take years, if not decades, to rebuild Aleppo. Representatives of the U.N. cultural agency UNESCO were expected to visit the area this week to survey the extent of the damage to the Old City, a warren of small streets in the shadow of a citadel and Umayyad mosque.

"This heritage is for everyone, no matter what their politics are," Syria's antiquities minister, Maamoun Abdulkarim, said last week in a plea for international help for reconstruction. "This is the very fabric of Syria. We will need it when the war ends."

Declassified Docs: Chilean Secret Police Wanted Miami Base For Brutal '70s Repression Campaign

By David Minsky

Miami New Times, January 26, 2017

From the Bay of Pigs invasion to the overthrow of democratically elected Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz, some of the CIA's darkest covert operations across Latin America have Miami connections.

Now, newly declassified documents show that the Magic City was almost a secret base for one of the bloodiest covert operations in Latin America, one that killed tens of thousands of people across a half-dozen countries.

The new documents show that the Gestapo-like Chilean secret police, or La Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA), wanted a U.S.-sanctioned base in Miami in the mid-'70s where operatives could carry out missions such as kidnappings and assassinations — a request that was at least considered by U.S. officials.

The report was included in a trove of more than 500 pages of declassified CIA documents ranging from the administrations of Gerald Ford to George H. W. Bush. The docs detail human rights abuses in Argentina and were released this past December 12 by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

One of those redacted reports details plans for a base to support activities related to Operation Condor, the codename for an "international consortium" of South American intelligence agencies founded in 1976 and secretly backed by the U.S. government.

Condor was based in Chile, whose president at the time was the brutal dictator Augusto Pinochet. But Condor was really a U.S.-backed "black operations" campaign, says Long Island University professor J. Patrice McSherry. Its purpose was to destroy political opposition to the South American military dictatorships — specifically in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia — propped up by Americans in the '70s.

The right-wing militias targeted anyone suspected of sympathies to communism and killed as many as 80,000 people over two decades, according to the "Archives of Terror," a cache of documents stemming from the operation that were unearthed by human rights activists in Paraguay in 1992.

Many others also disappeared. Jorge V. Sznaider, Jorge Perez Brancato, Hugo Maiosovsky, Noemi Graciela Beltone, Carlos Alberto Perez, and Mirta Silber de Perez, all 20-somethings who were holding a political discussion in their apartment in the late '70s, were picked up by the police. They haven't been heard from since the declassified report was first published August 3, 1979.

The secret police involved in Condor used torture, abductions, disappearances, and renditions to further their aims. One of the operation's most dubious parts was "Phase III," a highly secretive program that involved special teams traveling to foreign countries to carry out missions — including assassinations — against Condor enemies, the report states.

Such missions were carried out in 1974 when Gen. Joaquin Zenteno Anaya, a Bolivian ambassador to France, was killed by a car bomb in Paris. Two years later, an exiled Argentine ambassador to the U.S. named Orlando Letelier and an American citizen named Ronni Moffitt were assassinated with a car bomb along Embassy Row in Washington, D.C. It was later revealed that Pinochet had played a personal role in the murders.

Those are probably the kinds of missions that Condor's brass hoped to carry out from its base in Miami. "The plot is relevant insofar as it provides evidence of Condor's capabilities as well as its possible intentions in planning to open a station in Miami shortly afterward," the report states.

Miami's promixity to Latin America and access to the Cuban exile community made the city the perfect spot for DINA chief Manuel Contreras, who McSherry says wanted to connect Pinochet with Cuban exiles and other anti-Castro Cubans to carry out joint operations.

News of the Miami base was first reported by the Washington Post, which cited a classified U.S. Senate report in a August 9, 1979, article, "Foreign Spy Activity Found Rampant in U.S., the Chileans." Using secondary sources, McSherry briefly covered it in her 2005 book, Predatory States.

However, the newly declassified documents are the first official proof of the Miami connection to the brutal secret war.

Knowledge of the base reached all the way to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who shot down the idea in messages that McSherry says were sent through covert channels rather than in a formal denunciation.

This is significant, McSherry says, because it demonstrates the U.S. government's complicity in Condor.

"One surmises that the information is still sensitive because it indicates that Washington was not only well informed of Condor but also was an unofficial or top-secret sponsor of the cross-border system," McSherry tells New Times.

When contacted, officials from the U.S. State Department declined to comment on the declassified documents, and several emails sent by New Times to Kissinger went unreturned.

Pinochet was never convicted of the human rights abuses he was accused of and spent his last days under house arrest in Chile. He died in 2006.

The entire set of declassified documents can be downloaded from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's Tumblr website.

David Minsky is a U.S. Navy veteran and Tulane graduate who has experience reporting on stories from California, South Florida, and the Deep South. He has also won some journalism awards. Email or tweet David with story tips and ideas.

North Korean Defector: Information Flow Will Help Bring Down Kim Jong Un

NPR, January 26, 2017

What makes North Korea feel so oppressive? If you ask its highest-ranking defector in decades, the answer is censorship. Thae Yong Ho, who was until last summer a Pyongyang envoy in London, argues that increasing the flow of information into the North is what can sow the seeds of popular discord to bring down the Kim Jong Un regime.

Thae had served in London for 10 years, and previously in Denmark, before he defected to South Korea last summer with his wife and two sons. He spent several months being questioned and debriefed by South Korean intelligence before settling into his new life in Seoul, where bodyguards accompany him most hours of the day.

"When we got out of the embassy, I told [my sons] that now I'm going to cut the chain of slavery and you are a free man," Thae said at a Wednesday news conference in Seoul.

His 19- and 26-year-old sons' first concern was whether they could freely browse the Internet.

"You can go to the Internet, you can do Internet games whenever you like, you can read any books, watch any films," Thae said he told them.

That's not the way of life in North Korea, where fewer than 1 percent of the population has Internet access. Foreign books, films and information are banned — and TV only broadcasts propaganda.

Breaking down the censorship and surveillance state from within, Thae believes, is the only way to bring down North Korea's nuclear weapons-obsessed leader. With information comes education, Thae says — and that can lead to a popular uprising.

"Once they are educated to that level, I am sure they will stand up," Thae told reporters.

A shortwave radio station called Free North Korea Radio has been delivering information from outside the country since 2005, broadcasting from the second floor of a multipurpose building just outside Seoul.

"The power of radio has been huge in advancing the cause of freedom and human rights," says Suzanne Scholte, head of the American group that partners with the station. Free North Korea Radio puts out at least an hour a day of programming, produced by North Korean defectors for their fellow North Koreans to hear.

"This is a critical way for them to understand that the North Korean defectors living in South Korea are working for freedom and rights, providing them with information but helping them to understand that the source of their misery is Kim Jong Un. And their true ally is the people of South Korea and the people of America," Scholte says.

This kind of tactic is far more effective than any military action, Thae, the defector, said. Any surgical or preemptive strike on the North in an attempt to eliminate its nuclear facilities would only turn South Korea — a longtime U.S. ally where 28,000 American troops are based — "into ashes," he told reporters.

And the power of information explains why the Pyongyang regime is so resistant to moves like propaganda loudspeakers on the border, he said.

"[The] Kim Jong Un regime is trying to prevent and is trying every possibility to stop the influx of outside information," Thae said.

Information flows into the former Soviet Union and its Eastern bloc, he said, were key to crippling those systems more than two decades ago. And the many tactics to spread information into the North are working, he said.

"The leaflets, USBs with films [stored on them] can be introduced to North Korea. So the ways of educating North Korean people for people's uprising is also evolving," Thae said.

Despite the total surveillance state in present-day North Korea, he said, those with the means simply pay off the officers who catch them watching or listening to outside information.

"So even this surveillance system is getting more and more corrupted," Thae said. But that's also giving information an opening to get into a notoriously closed country.

Haeryun Kang contributed to this story.

Trump Needs A Strategic Plan To Combat Terror

By Shay Hershkovitz

The Hill, January 26, 2017

In his inaugural address, President Trump re-declared his campaign-trail commitment to the war on terror, promising to "unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate from the face of the Earth." How the new administration will achieve this ambitious goal still remains to be seen – Trump has not yet presented a concrete strategic plan. The only thing one can draw from his past remarks is that he intends to present a fundamentally different strategy than that of the Obama administration.

Nevertheless, one might ask if such a strategy could or should be essentially different. In any case, the U.S. intelligence community will unavoidably have a prominent role in determining its overall shape.

Any effective antiterror strategy must have a unique, threefold combination of measures: (a) dampening the motivations of terrorists and their supporters, (b) damaging their operational capabilities and (c) strengthening the mental resilience of terror targets. The first two tasks are in the hands of the intelligence community, and the latter is most importantly a matter of national leadership.

These three avenues of action are often contradictory: For instance, antiterror operations may only increase the motivations of potential supporters to become active terrorists. Sometimes, such measures yield domestic criticism, which could erode the standing of the leadership (e.g., in the case of drone attacks against ISIS, for which Obama was highly criticized).

The Obama administration tried to combine the three elements as follows: It tried to reconcile with the Muslim world, emphasizing that terror and Islam are not synonymous, while conducting countless global operations against ISIS and Al-Qaeda terrorists (relying mainly on airstrikes and special forces). Obama himself also attempted to demonstrate leadership – especially when Islamic terror hit the U.S. (e.g., after the Boston bombing) – and defended the need to continue his drone policy despite criticism.

Speculating on Trump's antiterror strategy raises some concerns: There are reasons to believe he will focus on combating terrorist capabilities rather the basic conditions under which terror grows and flourishes. History has taught us that such a strategy will almost always fail. The best such a policy could achieve is the maintenance of a "reasonable"

level of terror activities against the West. This goal hardly fulfills Trump's promises.

As for leadership, Trump has thus far demonstrated his ability to unite people around a common enemy (Islamic terrorism). But in order to onboard the entire nation to this ambitious task, he will have to find avenues to the heart of many more Americans. That cannot be achieved by relying on fear alone – he will also have to convey a message of hope. Furthermore, such leadership requires a unified front among the branches of the U.S. administration, starting with those at the forefront of the war on terror: the intelligence community. So far, Trump has focused on the rifts with the community rather than a shared vision and cause.

The intelligence community, for its part, needs to support and execute Trump's strategy – but more importantly, facilitate a strategic discussion with a president that has little geopolitical background. Yes, it needs to provide accurate tactical information upon which U.S. forces will act in order to hit ISIS around the world. But more importantly, the intelligence community needs to emphasize the importance of tackling the root causes that sustain terror. It needs to present to the president and his senior staff a holistic view of terrorism, and insist that decision-makers divorce from one-dimensional perceptions – i.e., "let's just smoke them out and kill 'em!"

It is also the intelligence community's role to find common ground with the president, assisting him in demonstrating leadership. It therefore needs to refrain from any political discussion, and remain as professional as possible.

There are two other tasks for the intelligence community: It seems that there is growing distance between America and its allies. Here, the intelligence community could be a silent partner in maintaining close relationships with U.S. partners around the world while reassuring U.S. commitment to shared interests. Intelligence organizations often operate as clandestine ambassadors – and with a highly controversial president, the intelligence community's role in that respect is critical.

Secondly, the intelligence community should consistently explain to the new administration that the warming relationship with Russia could easily work against America's interests. It needs to convey to the White House that when dealing with the war on terror, Washington and Moscow's goals – especially in the Middle East – are not necessarily aligned. Yes, Russia could "do the dirty work" in Syria which America is reluctant to do. But the fact is that the two superpowers don't see eye-to-eye on the end result there.

This is especially the case if the U.S. puts Iran – Russia's most important regional ally – in its sights. Here too, the intelligence community should clearly and repeatedly convey that message, while keeping a close eye on Russia – even if its boss chooses a different approach for the time being.

Shay Hershkovitz, Ph.D., is chief strategy officer at Wikistrat, Inc. and a political science professor at Tel Aviv University specializing in intelligence studies. He is also a former IDF intelligence officer whose book, "Aman Comes To Light," deals with the history of the Israeli intelligence community.

The views expressed by contributors are their own and are not the views of The Hill.

Theresa May Could Withhold Intelligence Sharing With Donald Trump's CIA If It Adopts Torture Techniques

By Joe Watts

Independent (UK), January 26, 2017

Theresa May has indicated that the UK could stop working with US intelligence agencies if they adopt torture techniques for extracting information from suspects.

The Prime Minister was asked about British guidelines stating the country's spies cannot work with other nations' agencies that practise torture, amid the storm over Donald Trump's plans to lift a ban on overseas CIA "black sites".

Speaking as she flew to the United States to become the first foreign leader to meet Mr Trump, she said the UK's guidance is "very clear" and that the approach towards torture had not changed and would not.

Asked by journalists about the intelligence sharing guidelines, she said: "We condemn torture and my view on that won't change – whether I'm talking to you or talking to the President."

After being repeatedly pushed about the UK position on not sharing intelligence with countries practising torture, she said: "Our guidance is very clear about the position that the UK takes, and our position has not changed."

She added: "The real question you should be asking is what do we think about torture? What we think about torture is we condemn it. We do not believe in torture. That position has been clear for some time and that position is not going to change."

Mr Trump is expected to rip up restrictions put into place by Barack Obama after earlier stating that he wanted to bring back waterboarding and a "hell of a lot worse".

Ms May was on Wednesday challenged over the issue in the House of Commons by Tory MP Andrew Tyrie, who demanded the UK not be "dragged into facilitating" torture.

The Prime Minister responded: "We do not sanction torture and we do not get involved in it. That will continue to be our position."

UK Intelligence Services Face Dilemma After Trump Backs Torture

GCHQ, MI6 and MI5 rely heavily on the US, but using intelligence obtained by torture risks breaching international law

By Ewen Macaskill

The Guardian (UK), January 26, 2017

Donald Trump's comment that he believes torture "absolutely works" would present the UK intelligence services, who work closely with US counterparts, with a major dilemma if the US were to resume such interrogation methods.

The bulk of the intelligence being assessed by the UK agencies – especially GCHQ but also the overseas agency MI6 and, to a lesser extent, M15 – comes from the US. None of them would want to contemplate loss of that access, yet if the intelligence had been obtained through torture it would put them in breach of international law.

A former British diplomat who worked closely with UK intelligence in a number of conflict hotspots in the Middle East and central Asia said the agencies would be torn between a moral and legal obligation not to be involved with torture and their heavy dependence on the US.

The UK intelligence agencies – as well as other countries with which the US shares intelligence such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand and, one rung further down, countries such as Germany and France – are on paper opposed to torture and theoretically are supposed to absent themselves from the room if torture is taking place.

A UK source familiar with the intelligence community recalled a conversation with a CIA station chief in the aftermath of 9/11 in which he referred to MI6 officials as "wimps".

But in reality the position of the UK intelligence agencies is more ambiguous. They take information that they know comes from countries that use torture, such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and countries that have done so in the past, such as the US.

They would argue that it is near impossible when sifting through raw data to distinguish what has been freely given and what has been obtained under duress.

Eliza Manningham-Buller, a former head of MI5, when talking about a rendition controversy involving MI6 – its long-time rival, though the two agencies work closer together these days – questioned whether "the UK supped with a sufficiently long spoon".

The full extent to which MI6 was involved in rendition in the aftermath of 9/11 has still to come out.

Trump qualified his comments in the interview by saying he would defer to his security advisers such as the CIA director, Mike Pompeo, and the defence secretary, James Mattis, who has said that beer and cigarettes are more effective in getting someone to talk than waterboarding.

The former head of MI6 Sir John Sawers described torture as illegal and abhorrent in a 2010 speech and said the agency faced real, constant dilemmas to avoid using intelligence gathered by such methods. After standing down in 2015, he said torture produced "useful information".

Others argue that information obtained through torture is untrustworthy and, on top of that, the US, the UK and other countries lose any claim to the moral high ground, unable to castigate countries such as China and Russia where torture is commonplace. Revelations of torture also contribute to radicalisation.

The Bush administration sanctioned the use of torture in the aftermath of 9/11 and while it stopped soon after, it was only when Barack Obama became president in 2009 that a formal ban was announced.

Much of what MI6 does overseas is, just by the nature of spying, illegal. Spies are covered by section 7 of the 1994 Intelligence Services Act, which protects them from prosecution as long as their actions are authorised by the government.

Findyr Founder Anthony Vinci Named NGA Director Of Plans And Programs

By Dominique Stump

ExecutiveGov, January 26, 2017

The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency has appointed Anthony Vinci, founder of crowdsourced data collection firm Findyr, to succeed Misty Tullar as director of plans and programs at NGA.

Vinci will assume his new role Jan. 30 and oversee the development of new concepts and collaborations across the agency, NGA said Wednesady.

"Anthony brings a unique background and set of skills to NGA and our leadership team," said NGA Director Robert Cardillo.

Cardillo added that Vinci will support NGA's agile acquisition, modeling, crowdsourcing, code development, disparate data sets and anticipatory analysis efforts.

Vinci previously served as a Defense Department staff officer and worked for a global management firm, a machine learning company and a private equity firm.

Trump Admin Pursues Rethinking Of National Security Policy

By Eric Tucker

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – President Donald Trump is embracing the idea of Guantanamo Bay as a jail for terror suspects, a repudiation of the Obama administration's longtime push to prosecute captured militants in the U.S. court system.

A draft order spelling out a tougher line in the fight against terror dramatically rethinks how the U.S. should detain, monitor and prosecute terrorist suspects. It would

reverse Obama's efforts to close the military detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and reopen the idea of establishing CIA detention facilities outside the United States.

In its support of Guantanamo the document is likely to renew a debate, which the Obama administration considered closed, about whether military tribunals offshore or civilian trials in American courts offer a fairer and more efficient path to justice.

"To take a step backward would be both practically misguided and morally indefensible," said Eric Freedman, a constitutional law professor at Hofstra University and a legal consultant for Guantanamo detainees.

"The United States, for better or worse, sets an example for governments and social movements alike throughout the world, and it's already the case that the groups opposed to American values have made extraordinarily effective use of Guantanamo and its betrayal of American values," Freedman said.

Though the draft order, which the White House said was not official, takes a more expansive view of national security power, it also in some instances relies on legal authorities that remained in place during the Obama administration but went unused.

Guantanamo was open for the duration of the Obama administration, leaving it available for use by a new administration. And though Obama opted not to indefinitely detain newly captured suspects, courts have recognized the government's authority to keep without trial suspects captured during wartime and connected to specific terror groups like al-Qaida.

"The authorities are still there, and there's no legal reason why it wouldn't be available to a President Trump," said Stephen Vladeck, a national security law professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

Aspects of the draft order weren't surprising given Trump's campaign promise to fill Guantanamo with "bad dudes." His pick for attorney general, Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, said at his confirmation hearing that he thought the prison, opened to take terror suspects after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, had served its purpose "marvelously well."

Support for it now represents a total reversal of eight years of efforts to close it. The Obama administration sent no new detainees there, and while not fulfilling a promise to close it, whittled the population from 242 to 41.

Obama's Justice Department maintained that the U.S. civilian court system was the most legally sound forum in which to prosecute terror suspects captured in the U.S. and overseas and cited hundreds of convictions in New York and other cities as proof.

Former Attorney General Eric Holder sought unsuccessfully in 2009 to move the suspected ringleader of the Sept. 11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, from Guantanamo to New York for trial, and though the plan was derailed by political opposition, has since expressed vindication as the military tribunal system at Guantanamo stalled.

The son-in-law of Osama bin Laden, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, was convicted in New York in 2014 on terror-related charges after being captured in Jordan. Ahmed Abu Khattalah, accused in the deadly 2012 attacks on a State Department compound in Benghazi, was captured in Libya in 2014 and is awaiting trial in Washington, D.C. And despite occasional objections from congressional Republicans, the Justice Department in the Obama administration has consistently used American courts to try suspects captured in the U.S. – including Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and the man accused in the Manhattan and New Jersey bombings last year.

Sessions and other Republicans have long expressed concern that civilian courts afford legal protections to which suspected terrorists are not entitled. He has warned that valuable intelligence can be lost if a detainee is advised of his right to remain silent and to have a lawyer. But in several major cases, federal officials have used a public safety exemption to interrogate for intelligence purposes high-value suspects, including Tsarnaev, before advising them of their Miranda rights and restarting the questioning.

Arguments that Guantanamo is a better forum than civilian courts have been "debunked by successful prosecution after successful prosecution," Todd Hinnen, who served as acting assistant attorney general for national security in the Obama Justice Department, said before the new draft order was announced.

"As a result, sending them before a less well-established, less tested system that's viewed as less legitimate by much of the world, would be a step backward," Hinnen said.

But Robert Turner, a national security law professor at the University of Virginia, disagreed, saying the military tribunal process has fewer "theatrics" that accompany a civilian court case, where a "fast-talking lawyer" could come in and mislead the jury. The tribunal process, he said, has "no-nonsense rules."

"I don't think Gitmo as a detention facility, per se, is one of the problems," he said.

Still, said Vladeck, the draft document lacked enough "teeth" and specifics for the public to know how much of its agenda could actually be implemented or survive inevitable statutory and political hurdles.

"Morally it's a terrifying document, but legally, I think it's mostly a lot of hot air," he said.

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U.K. Secret Service Boss: Real 'Q' From 'James Bond' Films Is A Woman

By Jane Onyanga-Omara

USA Today, January 26, 2017

LONDON — A change of casting could be in order in the James Bond movie franchise after the chief of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service revealed the real-life "Q" is a woman.

Alex Younger, the head of the agency commonly known as MI6, which employs Bond in the films, made the revelation while giving a speech encouraging women to join the organization,which supplies the British government with foreign intelligence.

Q, the tech guru behind Bond's deadly gadgets, has never been acted by a woman. The role was most recently played by Ben Whishaw alongside Daniel Craig's Bond in Skyfall and Spectre. Whishaw's predecessors include the late Desmond Llewelyn, who played the character between 1963 and 1999, and John Cleese.

"The real-life Q is looking forward to meeting you and I'm pleased to report that the real-life Q is a woman," Younger told attendees of the Women in IT awards in London on Wednesday, according to the BBC.

"We've got to get over and see through the Bond thing," he added.

He said the movies lead to a stereotype that the type of people who join MI6 are usually "really posh" or went to the elite Oxford University.

"The more different people you have in the room, in these high-pressure circumstances in which we operate, the better the decisions," Younger said.

"So, success for me is a deeper, broader range of technological skills in MI6 and more diversity, in particular more women."

Younger, who became the head of MI6 in 2014, has served as an MI6 officer in countries including Afghanistan, where he led its operations against al-Qaeda.

Real-life 'James Bond Q' Is A Woman, MI6 Reveals

BBC News (UK), January 26, 2017

The real-life equivalent of Q in the James Bond films is a woman, the head of MI6 has said.

Alex Younger, chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, made the revelation as he encouraged more women to join the service.

He said there is a stereotype that MI6 spies were posh and he wanted recruits from diverse backgrounds.

The character of Q, a technology expert, has always been played by a man in the Bond films.

Speaking at the Women in IT awards on Wednesday, Mr Younger said: "The real-life Q is looking forward to meeting you and I'm pleased to report that the real-life Q is a woman."

Image copyright Rex/Shutterstock Image caption Q is played by actor Ben Whishaw in the latest James Bond films

The MI6 chief said one of his priorities is to employ talent but "we've got to get over and see through the Bond thing".

He recognised that the fictional MI6 spy is great in some ways as it "means that all of our opponents think there's an MI6 officer behind every bush and that we're 10,000 times larger than we actually are".

However, he went on to say that the character leads to a stereotype of the "particular sort of person that will join MI6 – whether they're really posh or going to Oxford".

"The issue for me is that stands in the way of something that I regard as being so important, which is that we can reach into every community in Britain and make sure that we get the people that are the best regardless of their background," he added.

Mr Younger said he wanted to make MI6 even more diverse which would bring a full range of skills to the service and improve its decision-making.

He added: "The more different people you have in the room, in these high-pressure circumstances in which we operate, the better the decisions.

"So, success for me is a deeper, broader range of technological skills in MI6 and more diversity, in particular more women."

MI6 Reveals This Real-Life James Bond Counterpart Is Actually A Badass Woman

By Natalie Gil

Refinery29 (UK), January 26, 2017

It was just last week that the UK's intelligence agency, GCHQ, launched a competition to encourage more girls to consider a career in cyber security, and now there's more good news for girls and women hoping to break into intelligence.

The chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (aka MI6), Alex Younger, today revealed that the real-life inspiration for Q in the James Bond films is actually a woman, reported the BBC.

The character of Q has always been cast as a man in the films and has been played by Ben Whishaw since 2012's Skyfall.

There is a stereotype that MI6 spies are all "posh", middle class men, Younger said, adding that he wanted to boost diversity and recruit more women.

"The real-life Q is looking forward to meeting you and I'm pleased to report that the real-life Q is a woman," Younger said yesterday at the Women in IT awards.

He said "we've got to get over and see through the Bond thing", and that the character makes people think of a "particular sort of person that will join MI6 – whether they're really posh or going to Oxford", the BBC reported.

Younger did admit that MI6 benefits in some ways from the Bond films. The franchise "means that all of our opponents think there's an MI6 officer behind every bush" and think the service is "10,000 times larger" than it actually is.

Speaking about the posh spy stereotype, he said: "The issue for me is that stands in the way of something that I regard as being so important, which is that we can reach into every community in Britain and make sure that we get the people that are the best regardless of their background."

Having more diversity in MI6 would broaden the service's skill set and improve the its decision-making, Younger said.

"The more different people you have in the room, in these high-pressure circumstances in which we operate, the better the decisions.

"So, success for me is a deeper, broader range of technological skills in MI6 and more diversity, in particular more women," he added.

Indeed, research supports the theory that the presence of women can enhance outcomes. Companies with women on the board perform better after all, and involving women in peacebuilding increases the likelihood that violence will end by 24%.

We're plotting a career change, stat.

Head Of Britain's Secret Service Says That James Bond Character Q Is Actually A Female

By Dan Gunderman, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, January 26, 2017

In 2012's "Skyfall," MI6's tech wizard Q, played by Ben Whishaw, says, "So much for my promising career in espionage."

Now, that could certainly be an omen for future James Bond movies (at least where Whishaw is concerned). That is, if filmmakers want to portray the character accurately, as the position is currently filled, then they'd need to cast a female.

Delivering the keynote speech at the Women in IT Awards in London on Wednesday, the head of Britain's secret service, Sir Alex Younger, traditionally known as C, admitted that the crafty Q is actually a female.

In his speech, Younger urged more women to join MI6, especially in scientific and technological capacities, the Guardian reports.

Panel discussion entitled "The View from Foreign Intelligence Chiefs" at Third Ethos and Profession of Intelligence Conference, Sept. 20, 2016. (GW Center for Cyber and Homeland Security/Youtube)

"If any of you would like to join us...the real-life Q is looking forward to meeting you and I'm pleased to report that the real-life Q is a woman," he said.

Many critics believe that Whishaw, 36, revived the role of Q — the wily intelligence/tech pro who offers Bond neat gadgets and weapons, like rocket-firing cars and magnetic watches. Whishaw played Q in "Skyfall" and "Spectre." He's also been played by John Cleese, Desmond Llewelyn and Peter Burton.

Commenting on the pertinent Bond films, Younger said that the stereotype of the overseas intelligence-gathering agency tends to reflect Bond and his suave appearance and maneuvers, the Guardian reports.

Younger qualified it, though, saying that Bond has helped provide the agency with a larger world presence. Still further, he added that the films do not reflect the nature of the job and the sorts of candidates that fill them, Guardian writes.

"Success for me is a deeper, broader range of technological skills in MI6 and more diversity, in particular more women," Younger said.

Everything you thought you knew about Q from James Bond is wrong https://t.co/c66J6P3EFF pic.twitter.com/pRp7k9Qazl— Mashable (@mashable) January 26, 2017

With technology at the forefront of current operations, Younger said that to employ the right candidates, he's had to dispell myths, Guardian notes.

"(Bond) is great in some ways because it means that all of our opponents think there's an MI6 officer behind every bush and that we're 10,000 times larger than we actually are," he said. "But there's a problem because it leads to a (particular) stereotype."

It's likely that this year, the next James Bond film will be announced, and front and center in that reveal will be whether Daniel Craig is set to return to the main role. Also, will filmmakers keep Q, and perhaps create a similar, senior-level position for a capable female? (We're missing Judi Dench's M.)

James Bond's Q Is A Woman In Real Life, U.K. Secret Service Boss Reveals

By Alex Ritman

Yahoo! News, January 26, 2017

The character has been played by Ben Whishaw, John Cleese, Desmond Llewelyn and, just once (and very briefly), Peter Burton.

But it seems 007 casting directors have been getting one crucial thing wrong about James Bond's legendary provider of rocket-firing cars, nifty last-minute life-saving gadgets and that magnetic watch that can undo zips: Q.

Delivering the keynote speech at the Women in IT Awards, held in London Wednesday, the head of Britain's

Secret Service, Alex Younger, revealed that the real-life Quartermaster is female.

"If any of you would like to join us … the real-life Q is looking forward to meeting you, and I'm pleased to report that the real-life Q is a woman," he said, in comments reported by The Guardian.

While the next Bond film will likely be unveiled this year, lifting the long-rattling lid on whether Daniel Craig will or will not be returning as the super spy, the role of Q – which Whishaw, 36, seemingly revitalized after two performances so far – is not thought to be in question.

Intel Committee Dems To Trump: Read Torture Report

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, January 26, 2017

Democrats on the Senate Intelligence Committee are urging President Trump to read a 2014 report on the CIA's programs before deciding to restart "enhanced interrogation."

Seven senators on the committee sent a letter to Trump on Thursday saying it is of the "utmost importance" that he read the committee's findings.

"To avoid making the mistakes of the past it is of the utmost importance that you familiarize yourself with, and ensure that any Executive Branch officials involved in the formation of policy on detention and interrogation review, the full Committee study," they wrote in the letter.

Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), the top Democrat on the committee, as well as Democratic Sens. Dianne Feinstein (Calif.), Ron Wyden (Ore.), Martin Heinrich (N.M.), Joe Manchin (W.Va.), Kamala Harris (Calif.) and Independent Sen. Angus King (Maine) signed the letter.

They added that the report was meant to be used for any future interrogation guidelines and "remains a critical resource for anyone considering detention and interrogation policy."

The 2014 report found that many of the CIA's practices were overly brutal and possibly illegal. The Democrats noted that both Mike Pompeo, the new CIA director, and Sen. Jeff Sessions, nominated to be attorney general, pledged that they would review the full report.

A draft executive order circulated this week sparked a new round of debate over interrogation techniques, including waterboarding.

The order would revoke a series of Obama administration rules that closed CIA "black sites," granted Red Cross access to all detainees and limited interrogators to techniques approved in the Army Field Manual.

The Senate Democrats said reports that Trump is considering restarting the Bush-era programs are "deeply troubling."

But White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Wednesday the document wasn't from the White House, adding, "I have no idea where it came from."

But he refused to answer questions about whether Trump was weighing the basic policy recommendations contained in the draft order.

Trump signaled during an interview with ABC News on Wednesday that his administration would be announcing its plan for CIA black sites within hours, but as of Thursday evening the White House hadn't made an announcement.

He also noted that he had been discussing waterboarding "as recently as 24 hours ago with people at the highest level of intelligence."

Feinstein previously pushed late last year for the outgoing Obama administration to make the full 7,000-page document public.

While Obama told Senate Intelligence leaders he would preserve report in his presidential papers, he didn't declassify the document before leaving office earlier this month.

Intel Committee Democrats Outraged Over Trump's Torture Comments

By Guy Taylor

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

Democrats on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence expressed outrage Thursday over President Trump's suggestion this week that he is considering allowing U.S. officials to restart a program that used enhanced interrogation techniques tantamount to torture against terrorism suspects.

In a letter to Mr. Trump, six Democrats and one independent on the committee called on the president to read the classified version of the committee's 2014 report on a now-shuttered CIA detention and interrogation program before considering the possible resumption of such activities.

The CIA program was active during the years after 9/11. An unclassified version of the 2014 report outlined the committee's finding that enhanced interrogation techniques such as "waterboarding" are not an effective means of obtaining accurate information from suspects.

"To avoid making the mistakes of the past, it is of the utmost importance that you familiarize yourself with, and ensure that any Executive Branch officials involved in the formation of detention and interrogation policy review, the full Committee Study," Sen. Mark R. Warner of Virginia, the intelligence committee's ranking Democrat, said in the letter to Mr. Trump.

The letter was signed by committee Democrats Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris of California, Ron Wyden of Oregon, Martin Heinrich of New Mexico, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, and Angus King, an independent of Maine.

No Republicans signed the letter.

The issue burst to the forefront in Washington this week after news organizations obtained a purported draft of a presidential order that would keep open the terrorist detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and lift a the ban "black site" prisons and revive torture tactics.

Mr. Trump defended the use of waterboarding on terrorism suspects Wednesday, defying outrage from Capitol Hill and human rights advocates.

While Mr. Trump did not explicitly propose bringing back waterboarding, he said in an interview on ABC News that "it works."

Syracuse University, SRC To Help Intelligence Agencies Make Better Judgments

By Rick Moriarty

Syracuse (NY) Post-Standard, January 26, 2017

Syracuse, N.Y. – A team that includes researchers from Syracuse University and SRC Inc. is developing digital tools that will use crowdsourcing and other techniques to help the nation's intelligence analysts do their jobs better.

The team from SU, SRC, the University of Arizona and Colorado State University began work this month on the 4.5-year project under an $11.5 million contract from the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activit y, an arm of the Office for the Director of National Intelligence.

The team's task is to develop a software application that will aid analysts at the nation's intelligence agencies, including the CIA, FBI, the National Security Agency, Department of Homeland Security and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

"Our goal is to create a reasoning and reporting application that is not only effective, but also appealing to users by making the process intriguing and fun while not interfering with their natural reasoning and writing abilities," said Jennifer Stromer-Galley, a professor at SU's School of Information Studies who is leading the research team.

Currently, the intelligence community typically conducts analysis of national security and other matters by having individuals review information sources, think through issues, confer with colleagues and present written reports to policymakers. The approach requires no special training in methods, but it has its drawbacks – primarily that analysts often have trouble clearly reporting the assumptions they made during their analysis and identifying what they do not know.

The WMD Commission , in its report on how the U.S. intelligence community could have been so mistaken when it asserted before the second Gulf War that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, concluded that the failure was "in large part the result of analytical shortcomings" – specifically, "intelligence analysts were too wedded to their assumptions about Saddam's intentions."

"Perhaps most troubling, we found an Intelligence Community in which analysts have a difficult time stating their assumptions up front, explicitly explaining their logic, and, in the end, identifying unambiguously for policymakers what they do not know," the commission said.

Stromer-Galley said the application the research team is developing will guide analysts through a series of steps in which they look at the information they have obtained, evaluate the credibility of the information, list the assumptions used in judging the evidence, and identify the information they do not know and determine whether their conclusions might be different if they had the missing information.

The goal is also to have the software enable intelligence agencies to "crowdsource" their reports by having groups of people, with varying areas of expertise, analyze the information they have developed, she said.

The team also hopes to use "game-based" principles of human-computer interaction to make the application fun to use. Intelligence agencies already have applications that help them make judgments, but the software is "laborious to use," Stromer-Gally said.

"We want to bring in some aspect of computer games – puzzles and solving mysteries – so people are more willing to use it," she said. "If we build it but nobody wants to use it, we fail."

Other members of the team from SU participating in the project are research associate professor Nancy McCracken; associate professors Carsten Oesterlund and Lu Xiao from the iSchool; and professor Lael Schooler and assistant professor David Kellen from the Department of Psychology in the College of Arts & Sciences.

SRC , formerly known as Syracuse Research Corp., is a not-for-profit company in Cicero that conducts research and development for clients in the defense, environment and intelligence fields.

Rebooting The IC Information Environment

By Steven Aftergood

Secrecy News, January 26, 2017

Over the past several years, former Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper led an ongoing transformation of information policy in the U.S. intelligence community that stresses information sharing among intelligence agencies based on a common information technology infrastructure.

On his way out the door last week, DNI Clapper signed Intelligence Community Directive 121 on Managing the Intelligence Community Information Environment, dated January 19, 2017.

The goal is for each IC member agency "to make information readily discoverable by and appropriately retrievable to the [entire] IC."

Although the policy makes allowance for unique individual agency requirements, and acknowledges legal and policy restrictions on sharing of privacy information, a common IC-wide information architecture is otherwise supposed to become the new default for each intelligence community agency.

"IC elements shall first use an IC enterprise approach, which accounts for all IC equities and enhances intelligence integration, for managing the IC IE [Information Environment] before using an IC element-centric solution," the new directive says.

Further, "IC elements shall […] migrate IC IT capabilities to IC IT SoCCs [Services of Common Concern] as quickly and efficiently as possible."

Increased sharing of information naturally entails increased vulnerability to compromise of the shared information.

To help mitigate the increased risk, "all personnel accessing the IC IE [must] have unique, identifiable identities, which can be authenticated and have current and accurate attributes for accessing information in accordance with IC policies, guidance, and specifications for identity and access management," the directive says.

The new IT Enterprise approach has received congressional support and seems likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

But in the current period of turbulence everything is uncertain, including the future of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence itself.

In its report on the FY2017 Intelligence Authorization Act last week, the Senate Intelligence Committee mandated a new review of the roles and missions of the ODNI.

"It has been more than ten years since the Congress established the position of the DNI in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, building on its predecessor, the Director of Central Intelligence. Given this experience and the evolving security environment, the Committee believes it appropriate to review the DNI's roles, missions and functions and adapt its authorities, organization and resources as needed," the new Committee report said.

NATIONAL NEWS

Why The President Is Feuding With The Media And The Intelligence Community

By Jon Finer

The Atlantic, January 25, 2017

American presidents can come to be defined by the fights they choose to wage.

Ronald Reagan fought big government at home and the Iron Curtain abroad. George H.W. Bush fought Saddam Hussein. Bill Clinton fought a "vast right-wing conspiracy" and Slobodan Milosevic. George W. Bush fought the Axis of Evil and the wellspring of extremism that his invasion of Iraq unleashed. Barack Obama fought the Islamic State, climate change and, occasionally, the U.S. Congress.

What, then, are Americans to make of the early fights President Donald Trump has picked with American institutions he seems to perceive as his primary foes: the press and the intelligence community?

Those battles, which have simmered for many months, came to a head over the weekend when the president held what amounted to an anti-press pep rally at the Central Intelligence Agency, whose analysis he had long disparaged, and his press secretary used his first appearance in the briefing room to shout easily disprovable "alternative facts" about the size of the crowd at Trump's inauguration, then stormed out without taking questions.

It would be easy to dismiss these developments as stunts aimed at distracting the public from some unpleasant failing, like the chaotic transition Trump's team has overseen or the scathing reviews of his grim inaugural address, or, perhaps, as spontaneous tantrums that speak more to temperament than to nefarious intentions.

But a closer look reveals a clear and unsettling logic behind Trump's two early fights and a common thread that links his unorthodox adversaries.

Trump is taking on two institutions in American life that are traditionally charged with establishing the factual basis that inform national-security decisions—the press in its public discourse and the intelligence community behind closed doors in the Situation Room.

In making foreign policy, what a government does should flow from what it purports to know about the world. For an administration that says it is bent on upending aspects of the established order, that means there is a premium on seizing control of baseline facts to fortify its narrative of an America in decline, our economy depleted by trade, our borders overrun by hordes bent on doing us harm.

Every administration feuds with the press, sometimes with good reason. With the unenviable task of writing about meetings they cannot attend, Washington reporters can be too easily seduced by leaks that may only provide a portion of the story.

Nor is it unusual for the objective truth of news events to be contested. When I covered the Iraq War for The Washington Post, my colleagues and I often found ourselves competing with an army of government spokespeople over whose account of the conflict was correct. The stakes of such disputes are high: public perceptions of the war helped determine how much latitude the Bush administration had to continue waging it.

What is different about the Trump administration's approach to the press is that it has not just advanced an alternate version of important events, but rather it appears to

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be signaling an assault on the very legitimacy of the press as an independent actor in American public life.

The result has been unusual statements by administration officials about what is or is not the press's job, ominous warnings about holding reporters "accountable" or ensuring they "suffer the consequences," misapplying the term "fake news" to legitimate organizations, and repeated statements by the president himself that the press are "the most dishonest human beings," a sentiment he echoed to chilling applause at the CIA.

At least part what explains this onslaught is that the press has been the first line of defense against a steady stream of contestable, or outright false, "facts" put forth by Trump since the dawn of his campaign, including about a deluge of rapists and murderers among Mexican immigrants, a surge of violent crime across urban America, or millions of fraudulent voters in the 2016 election.

Now that candidate Trump has become President Trump, such "facts" are no longer just about winning votes. In government, they become the basis on which policies are sold to the public. For example, different decisions would surely flow from the myth advanced by Trump that the refugee population could be replete with terrorists, than from the reality that an infinitesimal few have been implicated in any crimes at all; or from his frequent claim that Iran received $150 billion in the nuclear deal it made with the international community, rather than the reality that it received a small fraction of that amount.

But Trump has not been content to merely distort the public debate over his policy proposals, an approach that may differ in degree, but not in kind, from that of his predecessors. Rather, and without recent precedent, he is also laying the groundwork to influence highly sensitive policy discussions by taking on the intelligence community, whose job is to frame those debates for national security decision-makers.

At the beginning of virtually every interagency meeting chaired by the president's National Security Council, representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency or the Office of the Director of National Intelligence are traditionally asked to brief on the current state of play for the issue at hand. For example, a meeting about the conflict in Iraq and Syria will often begin with an assessment of the current strength and disposition of Syrian regime and opposition forces, as well as the campaign against the Islamic State.

These updates can be highly influential—consider, for example, the different policy options that would ensue from an assessment that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is on his last legs, compared with one that indicates he will endure for the foreseeable future.

The Trump administration would hardly be the first to express skepticism about the intelligence community.

Before the Iraq War, former Vice President Richard Cheney famously pushed for information that would more strongly link Hussein to al Qaeda or document his possession of weapons of mass destruction. While being immersed in Obama administration foreign-policy debates over the last seven years, I often heard policymakers effectively use information gleaned from diplomatic conversations or platforms like Twitter to challenge what intelligence officials reported about emerging crises.

Excessive deference to intelligence can itself be irresponsible. Skepticism is constructive if it is intended to introduce important new perspectives or identify biases and false assumptions. But it sends a different message when Trump compares the intelligence community to Nazi Germany, or his advisors refer to the former director of the CIA—a respected career professional who served at senior levels in both Republican and Democratic administrations—as a "partisan political hack."

These are not substantive criticisms but assaults on the very legitimacy of the intelligence agencies, and it would be dangerous if they also prove to be a prelude to usurping their role in laying the factual predicate on which national security decisions are made.If Trump prevails in these fights, he could do more than simply enact his agenda; he could alter aspects of our political culture in ways that will be difficult to reverse.

The Trump administration may eventually abandon its burgeoning fights against the press and the intelligence community, but there is at least one reason to believe it will continue to go to unusual lengths.

In the near term, the new administration's biggest vulnerability seems to be nagging questions about its own legitimacy, which is why certain uncomfortable facts—about popular vote totals, FBI actions, or Russian meddling—generate a ferocious response.

Here too, the two institutions best-positioned to shape this evolving perception (other than the administration itself) will be the press, whose editorial decisions will determine how much public scrutiny such questions continue to receive, and the intelligence community, which may acquire and disseminate further evidence about Russia's role.

Any administration would contest a challenge to its basic claim to power. And it is hard to imagine this president ceding to anyone else's account of the facts. Therefore, while the intensity may ebb and flow, these fights are likely to continue, at least until the administration feels secure enough in its ability to advance its agenda and fend off attacks on its ascent.

Much of the world may not find Trump's early battles unfamiliar, let alone alarming. The United States has always distinguished itself from more autocratic powers like Russia and China, or from our partners in the Middle East, by the protections we provide our press, and by our aspiration to

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preserve some autonomy from political interference for the analysis of our intelligence agencies.

If Trump prevails in these fights, he could do more than simply enact his agenda; he could alter aspects of our political culture in ways that will be difficult to reverse.

In the meantime, it is important to clarify the underlying effect that the administration is seeking: not merely a political advantage by distraction or deception, but, rather, to undermine its main rivals and define its own reality on which to base the most consequential policy decisions it will face.

Trump Poised To Seek New Military Options For Defeating IS

By Lolita C. Baldor

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – President Donald Trump is expected to ask the Pentagon for ways to accelerate the fight against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria, and officials said the options probably would include steps the Obama administration considered but never acted on, from adding significantly more U.S. troops to boosting military aid to Kurdish fighters

Trump's visit Friday to the Defense Department's headquarters will start the conversation over how to fulfill his inauguration address pledge to eradicate radical Islamic terrorism "completely from the face of the Earth."

Among the possible options are sending in more Apache helicopters and giving the U.S. military broader authority to make routine combat decisions, according to current and former U.S. officials familiar with the ongoing discussions.

The officials weren't authorized to publicly discuss internal deliberations and spoke on condition of anonymity.

As a candidate and now president, Trump has never articulated a detailed plan for defeating IS, and his thoughts on a strategy are murky.

He has railed against the trillions of dollars that America's post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost. But he suggested at one point that he would have "no choice" but to exponentially expand the Obama administration's limited footprint of American forces fighting the militants.

There are about 5,160 U.S. troops in Iraq now, about 100 fewer than the maximum cap. There are no more than 503 in Syria.

In a Republican primary debate last March, Trump raised the prospect of needing 20,000 to 30,000 troops to "knock out" IS.

It's unlikely that military commanders would push for many thousands of additional troops in Iraq. While the Iraqis have asked for more help, a large U.S. military presence could unsettle the fragile, U.S.-allied government.

One possible option in Syria is sending an Army brigade to help retake IS headquarters of Raqqa, according to the officials. Military planners have discussed that option during previous reviews, and could give it to Trump so he has the widest array of possible changes.

The idea always involved the U.S. handing off authority to a local council or group to govern liberated areas, but military commanders never endorsed or recommended the proposal in the past.

More likely could be new ways to enhance the abilities of the U.S.-backed Syrian Kurds, known as the YPG. They have been the most effective force against IS in northern and eastern Syria.

American support is sensitive.

NATO ally Turkey considers the group a terrorist organization. But the YPG forms the main force to retake Raqqa and some in the Pentagon have suggested giving the Kurds heavy weapons, including rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and heavy combat vehicles. The idea never made it through debate in President Barack Obama's National Security Council.

Military commanders have said they're prepared to give the Trump White House a broad range of options. Many will involve expanding existing efforts to train, advise and enable local Iraqi and Syrian forces. Increased intelligence and surveillance are options, as is allowing U.S. troops to embed more frequently with Iraqi soldiers near the front lines.

The Pentagon also would like more freedom to make daily decisions in how it fights the enemy.

The Obama administration often forced military leaders to seek permission for tactical combat decisions, frustrating commanders. One example, according to a senior official, involved the use, placement and staffing of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System – a highly lethal and effective rocket launcher used in Iraq. Commanders would like greater authority to decide when and how to use the weapon.

Military leaders hope for less micromanagement from the White House, but there is an expectation the Trump administration may set new parameters for the military to work within.

At the Pentagon on Friday, Trump planned to host a formal swearing-in ceremony for Defense Secretary James Mattis, a retired Marine general. The president also was to meet privately with Mattis and military leaders in what's called the Tank – the Joint Chiefs of Staff's secure conference room.

One big decision Trump will have to address is whether to keep fighting IS primarily through local forces or upending the strategy by assuming a greater U.S. leadership role through more forces on the ground.

A wild-card to all the planning is Trump's desire for closer counterterrorism coordination with Russia.

In Syria, the Obama administration and the Russians backed two opposing sides in the nation's civil war. But that conflict has slowed since Russia helped Syria's government oust rebels from the city of Aleppo. Direct negotiations between the government and rebels took place this week for the first time in years.

It's unclear, however, how much Washington and Moscow can cooperate.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, has talked about improving high-level military contact but hasn't advocated military cooperation or joint operations in Syria.

Even intelligence-sharing with Moscow faces legal hurdles. Current law prohibits military cooperation and U.S. officials worry about America being held responsible if a Russian airstrike kills civilians.

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Trump To Seek Quick Progress With Japan's Abe On Replacement Trade Deal

By David Brunnstrom And Matt Spetalnick

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Nafta's Net U.S. Impact Is Modest

Pact leaves winners and losers, but its overall impact is more complex than the trade balance suggests

By Jacob M. Schlesinger, Andrew Tangel And Valerie Bauerlein

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Gloom Descends On Mexico's Nafta Capital

President Trump's threat to renegotiate the free-trade agreement and build a wall has created anxiety in Monterrey, where foreign investment lifted thousands of workers into the middle class and further enriched the city's mighty industrialists

By Robbie Whelan

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Donald Trump's Pledge To Use Only U.S. Steel Is Loaded With Caveats

By Danielle Paquette

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

During the campaign, President Trump visited a Pennsylvania town that lost its steel mill three decades ago — an economic wound that still stung. He pledged to rebuild the country with American steel, a move he said would "create massive numbers of jobs."

On Tuesday, Trump started with oil pipelines.

He ordered the commerce secretary to draft a policy requiring the nation's pipelines to be constructed or reinforced with American-made materials "to the maximum extent possible and to the extent permitted by law." (Wilbur Ross, his top choice for the role, owned several mills before selling them in 2004.)

The command came hours after Trump signed executive orders to revive the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines, two controversial projects former president Barack Obama had sought to block. It promptly sparked new debate around an old economic strategy: Does buying American actually help Americans?

"The devil is in the details."

The United States is part of the World Trade Organization's Government Procurement Agreement, which prohibits members from giving special treatment to domestic suppliers or discriminating against foreign companies, goods and services. Telling contractors to use only American products would violate that rule — but Trump's memorandum left room for interpretation.

The text included a caveat similar to one found in the stimulus law Obama signed in 2009, which guided infrastructure builders who received public grants to use American wares, as long as they complied with trade agreements. They largely avoided violations with a loophole: The government could run into trouble by directly funding projects, so it sends grant or loan money to states, which have more purchase-making flexibility.

The Transportation Department also follows a heavily caveated "Buy America" policy, which prioritizes U.S.-made materials when building new buses, railways and ferries, among other transit properties.

The effects of such programs are tough to measure, wrote policy researchers Michaela Platzer and William Mallett in a 2015 report for the Congressional Research Services.

"Although the Buy America provisions have been in place in some form for almost 40 years, it is difficult to know how they have affected steel and [manufacturing] in the United States, whether measured by jobs, output, or any other indicator," Platzer and Mallett found. "Empirical evidence on the economic benefits or costs of domestic preference laws is largely lacking, in part because the effects are small compared with macroeconomic forces such as global economic growth and the related growth in demand for steel."

For example, they added: "The available data suggest that the steel produced for the Buy America market

represents a small portion of total domestic demand for steel."

Buy American doesn't always mean Buy American.

The Commerce Department's pipeline proposal, Trump advised, is due in 180 days. If the text remains vague, contractors could still seek supplies from, say, Canada if domestic steel producers jacked up prices or could not accommodate orders.

"The devil's in the details," said Chris Weld, a Boston trade lawyer whose firm represents American steel companies. "This is not a mandate. But it is a message to U.S. pipeline operators to consider steps to purchase U.S.-produced iron and steel."

Earlier this week, Trump met with a group of union leaders and members at the White House, telling them he intends to create American jobs through his proposed infrastructure investment. Trump's team is now considering a list of projects, including bridges and railways, that would together cost roughly $137 billion, reports show.

The Keystone XL and Dakota pipelines are the first White House-backed construction projects of the Trump era.

"We are — and I am — very insistent that if we're going to build pipelines in the United States, the pipe should be made in the United States," Trump said Tuesday.

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said the action demonstrates his commitment to boosting U.S. steel, in particular.

"This is the first step," Spicer said. "And the president really delivered on his campaign promise to put American steel back at the backbone of the U.S. economy."

In a statement Tuesday, Thomas Gibson, president of the American Iron and Steel Institute, a national industry advocacy group, praised Trump for his focus on American steel and manufacturing.

"Taken together," he said, "building these pipelines, ensuring key markets for domestic steel and pipe products, and lowering the burdens to manufacturing in the U.S., will help ensure that our industry remains highly productive and internationally competitive."

The beneficiaries of the domestic-first rules, of course, would be U.S. steel producers, which concentrate in the industrial Midwest and the South.

Some economists and leaders in the broader business community, however, have long opposed protectionist measures, arguing they delay projects and drive up costs. (In their 2015 report, Platzer and Mallett concluded such outcomes are possible, but no evidence supports that happens on a large scale.)

"Only a basic understanding of supply and demand is required to see that limiting competition for procurement projects ensures one outcome: taxpayers get a smaller bang for their buck," Daniel Ikenson, a trade scholar at the Cato Institute, a right-leaning think tank in Washington, wrote this week. "Sure, some U.S. companies will win bids, hire new workers, and generate local economic activity. What will be less visible — but every bit as real — are the contracts denied numerous other U.S. businesses and workers because the resources have been stretched and depleted to satisfy restrictive procurement rules."

Others feel the mere appearance of protectionism could strain trade relations, even if a "Buy American" declaration comes wrapped in caveats.

"Key words like 'buy American' are troubling," Jorge Guajardo, Mexico's former ambassador to China, told McClatchy last week. "That goes against the whole essence of NAFTA. Because the whole essence of the North American Free Trade Agreement is you do not distinguish between countries as you buy. There are rules."

About the jobs ...

While construction generates economic bumps, there's no evidence Trump's preference for domestic steel in infrastructure projects will jumpstart the industry. To start, most steel used on American soil already is produced in the United States: 71 percent last year, according to the American Iron and Steel Institute, an industry advocacy group.

The steel jobs started vanishing as technology advanced, allowing companies to produce more steel with less muscle. The AISI data shows the industry reached its employment peak at 650,000 workers in 1953. By 2015, that number had shrunk to 142,000. Labor productivity, however, has increased fivefold since 1980, surging from an average of 10.1 man-hours per ton to an average of 1.9.

Leo Gerard, international president of the United Steelworkers, a North American union with more than 800,000 U.S. and Canadian members, said he expects Trump's pipeline plan will create more steel jobs. But he doesn't expect the president's infrastructure goals will restore the industry to its former power.

"I don't want to be specific about one project," he said. "The important thing is we've got a substantial discussion going on about working on America's infrastructure. There are pipelines all over the place that need to be refurbished."

Hill Republicans Are Now Aiming For End Of Year To Pass Priorities

By Mike Debonis

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — Congress will pass legislation to remake health care, reform the federal tax system and secure the U.S. border with Mexico by year's end, House Speaker Paul D. Ryan said Thursday, confirming that lawmakers intend to aggressively push President Trump's campaign priorities.

But it won't be in the short time frame that some Republicans — including President Trump — first touted.

Plans that Ryan (R-Wis.) and other congressional leaders presented to lawmakers here Wednesday and Thursday extend beyond the traditional 100-day window for a new administration's top priorities. In the case of repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act, they appear to be looking well far past the initial window, measured in weeks, that they originally targeted.

Ryan defended the timeline Thursday, saying the scale of the planned legislation, as well as the need for the Senate to spend scarce floor time on executive nominations, meant taking a longer view: "We are trying to fix people's problems in this country. It's going to take more than simply 100 days."

Trump told the lawmakers Thursday, "Now we have to deliver."

"This Congress is going to be the busiest Congress we've had in decades, maybe ever," he said. "Enough all talk, no action. . . . This is our chance to achieve great and lasting change for our beloved nation."

Trump's 25-minute address was heavy on rallying cries but light on the policy details many lawmakers were hoping for to guide their legislative work. A closed-door question-and-answer session was set for after the speech, and Vice President Pence is set to deliver his own remarks afterward. British Prime Minister Theresa May, who will meet Trump at the White House on Friday, is also set to speak.

GOP lawmakers arrived here Wednesday and spent the day inside a closed-off downtown hotel, listening to their leaders sketch out plans for the coming months, laid out in charts and bullet points.

But they looked to Trump and Pence to animate those ambitions Thursday and project a sense of unity with lawmakers who have been uneasy at times — both with the new president's unpredictable outbursts and some of the potential details of his agenda.

That uneasiness was again on display when Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) faced reporters Thursday morning. They were asked about a draft executive order under White House consideration that could pave the way for the reopening of overseas "black sites," where the CIA was accused of using aggressive interrogation methods widely condemned as torture.

"That's not policy from the Trump administration, so push that aside," Ryan said. He later added: "Torture is not legal, and we agree with it not being legal."

McConnell added that new CIA Director Mike Pompeo "made it clear he is going to follow the law, and I believe virtually all of our members are comfortable with the state of the law on that issue now."

The leaders conceded that the scope of Trump's ambitions, coupled with their own desire to push forward their own policy goals now that the GOP has unified control in Washington, would require many months of deliberate legislative work.

"We have ambitious goals and ambitious timelines," Ryan told reporters. "Our goal is to get these laws done in 2017."

That timeline comports with major legislation pursued by former president Barack Obama at the outset of his administration. Congress quickly passed a fiscal stimulus bill, but a major health care overhaul — the Affordable Care Act — bogged down and was not finalized until more than a year after his inauguration.

Ryan added that "most of these big things" could be done by the August congressional recess, but he left open the possibility of other actions to come: "By and large, our goal is by the end of 2017, we have made good on so many of the promises that we made to the people and the policies we ran on."

GOP lawmakers gathered for morning sessions Thursday on two key issues: national security and health care.

The latter session was seen as a key opportunity for Ryan, McConnell and other congressional leaders to offer more details about their plans to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. But early indications were that those leaders had few new details on offer.

Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Tex.), for instance, said he was pursuing a concept of a "health-care backpack" that would include age-adjusted refundable tax credits, health savings accounts and access to electronic health records. All of those concepts were laid out in a House GOP blueprint issued last year.

Other key elements, such as how to preserve the viability of the individual insurance market while also requiring insurers to issue policies to people with preexisting conditions, were not addressed in detail, two lawmakers present said.

"There have been zero specifics offered, and it is fascinating to see the lack of clarity on this issue at this point," said one GOP lawmaker who attended the health care session and spoke on the condition of anonymity to candidly describe the private meeting.

Trump himself mentioned the ACA only in passing, and he made no mention of a replacement plan that he said in a recent Washington Post interview was "very much formulated down to the final strokes."

Instead, he dwelled on issues with the current law: "It's a disaster. I actually talked with Paul and the group about doing nothing for two years because the Dems would come begging us to do something. . . . But we have no choice. We want to get something done and get it done right."

Rank-and-file Republicans have expressed the desire for more clarity on how the law, which has expanded coverage to roughly 20 million Americans, will be replaced,

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even as key lawmakers played down the possibility that a fully formed Obamacare replacement plan would be rolled out in Philadelphia.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said that members would "understand the movement, the timing and what's going forward" on health care.

He described an action plan consisting of three "buckets" — a fast-track "reconciliation" bill that Republicans can pass without Democratic cooperation but is limited in scope under congressional rules; a series of executive actions that will be undertaken by the Trump administration to reform insurance markets; and a series of traditional bills completing the replacement that will need to gain some Democratic support.

"All three of these things move at the same time," McCarthy said.

Members are also discussed national security issues, including immigration, a day after Trump signed executive orders to build a southern border wall and cut off funds to cities that do not report undocumented immigrants to federal authorities.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Tex.), chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, said Thursday his panel would consider granting the Trump administration additional authorities.

Those, he said, could include new laws to allow authorities to track and deport visitors who overstay their visas, to grant Homeland Security officials broader access to federal lands along the border, and to extend expedited removal procedures for illegal immigrants from countries other than Mexico. Those procedures are already in place for Mexicans who enter the country illegally.

McCaul praised the Trump administration's executive actions, but he said Congress would ultimately have to act to carry out his plans — including passing legislation to spend as much as $15 billion of taxpayer dollars on the border wall.

"He's moving fast," he said. "But you can't do this without the money. Only Congress can do that."

Ryan brushed off several questions about whether Republicans would offset the cost of the wall with spending cuts elsewhere or new revenue. Many GOP lawmakers have refused to support previous bipartisan bills that did not offset federal spending but instead added to the budget deficit.

"We're going to wait and see from the administration to see what their supplemental [spending bill] looks like," Ryan said. "I'm not going to get ahead of a policy and a bill that has not been written yet."

Trump Boasts To GOP Lawmakers About His Win, Crowd Sizes

By Nolan D. McCaskill
Politico, January 26, 2017

Winning. Crowd size. Dishonest media. Voter fraud. Mexico.

A laundry list of President Donald Trump's obsessions overshadowed the substance of the remarks he delivered Thursday to a friendly audience of congressional Republicans at their annual retreat in Philadelphia.

While Trump peppered his 25-minute speech with nods to Obamacare, tax cuts and infrastructure spending, he sounded more like a candidate at a campaign rally than a newly inaugurated president revving up his party for an ambitious legislative agenda.

Trump wasted little time unloading about his fixations, almost immediately reveling in his victory as he stood before an entire room of Republicans, who for the first time in years control the White House and both chambers of Congress — and will likely have a majority on the Supreme Court this year after Trump announces his nominee next Thursday.

"Nice to win," he greeted his fellow Republicans. "Do we agree? It's been a while. It's been a while since we had this position. Nice to win."

Trump delved into a riff seconds later about how great it was for him to be in Philadelphia, first noting its place as home to where he attended college before acknowledging its history as "the place where we launched our American independence." What's more, Trump said, Philadelphia is a city in a blue state people said he, like many Republican candidates in the past, couldn't win.

He signaled to House Speaker Paul Ryan a much-anticipated change in Washington, D.C. — the end of years of dysfunction — telling the Wisconsin Republican he won't be wasting time writing legislation that never gets signed into law by the president before declaring: "This Congress is going to be the busiest Congress we've had in decades — maybe ever."

It was about five minutes into his address before he mentioned any policy, recounting what he described as "major contractual steps to restore the rule of law and to return power to everyday Americans" with executive actions. But nearly every mention of presidential memoranda and other actions he's signed since taking office last Friday included off-the-cuff segues into, for example, American pipes (Keystone and Dakota Access pipelines), a projection of 600,000 people for Saturday's anti-abortion March for Life and an assertion that there's "nothing fair about the media" because they allegedly report unfairly on crowd sizes (reinstatement of Mexico City policy), and a call for commerce secretary nominee Wilbur Ross to be confirmed by the Senate "because I hear he did fantastically well" (Trans-Pacific Partnership).

He said when he meets with British Prime Minister Theresa May on Friday, he'll have to negotiate deals himself since Ross has yet to be confirmed.

"I'm meeting with her tomorrow. I don't have my commerce secretary," Trump said. "They want to talk trade. So I'll have to handle it myself, which is OK."

Trump addressed the elephant in the room when he highlighted his recent actions on immigration, including the first move from the White House to begin construction of his proposed border wall. As Trump traveled to Philadelphia from Washington, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto had announced that he had informed the White House that he would no longer be visiting next week, a rejoinder to Trump's suggestion that the North American leaders shouldn't meet if Mexico won't agree to pay for the border wall, a pledge Trump made on the first day of his campaign.

"I've said many times that the American people will not pay for the wall, and I've made that clear to the government of Mexico," Trump said, going on to slam NAFTA as a "terrible deal."

"To that end, the president of Mexico and myself have agreed to cancel our planned meeting scheduled for next week," Trump said. His comment, however, is at odds with White House press secretary Sean Spicer, who during an earlier gaggle with reporters during the trip to Philadelphia was unaware that Peña Nieto would no longer be coming. Nevertheless, Trump continued: "Unless Mexico is going to treat the United States fairly with respect, such a meeting would be fruitless, and I want to go a different route. I have no choice."

The president quickly shifted into patting himself on the back for naming Vice President Mike Pence, a former Indiana governor, as his running mate. It wasn't until more than midway through his remarks that he mentioned his "ambitious legislative agenda."

The Republicans' agenda begins with the repeal and replacement of Obamacare, Trump said, before echoing his past criticisms of the Affordable Care Act as a "disaster." And that's as far as he got before he began name-checking his "all-star roster" of Cabinet nominees and, as he got to Jeff Sessions, relishing his endorsement during the presidential campaign by the Alabama senator and attorney general nominee.

Finding his way back to the topic at hand, Trump highlighted new trade deals to boost jobs and wages, tax reform, an infrastructure package, an investment to rebuild the military, a reduction of energy regulations and a commitment to stand with law enforcement as priorities of his nascent administration.

"We also need to keep the ballot box safe from illegal voting. And believe me, you take a look at what's registering, folks," Trump added. "They like to say, 'Oh, Trump, Trump, Trump.' Take a look at what's registering. We are going to protect the integrity of the ballot box, and we are going to defend the votes of the American citizen."

Trump has called for a "major" probe into what believes is widespread voter fraud that occurred in the presidential election despite no evidence to support the charge. He's expected to issue an executive action on the matter later Thursday. But as he told congressional Republicans, it's only the beginning.

"We are now only at the beginning of this incredible journey together," he said. "I am honored to be your partner in this amazing quest. I am privileged to stand with you, shoulder to shoulder, as we work every single day to make America great again."

Trump, Republican Lawmakers Wrestle Over Priorities For 'Bold' Agenda

By Richard Cowan And Susan Cornwell

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump To Urge Republican Lawmakers To Move Fast On His Agenda

By Billy House

Bloomberg Politics, January 26, 2017

President Donald Trump plans to rally Republican lawmakers on Thursday to act quickly on priorities including a border wall and a new health care law after years of partisan gridlock between the White House and Congress.

"The excuse of divided government is over," Kellyanne Conway, a Trump senior adviser, told reporters before Trump left Washington to speak to a Republican congressional retreat in Philadelphia.

Republicans control both the House and Senate in addition to the White House, the first time the party has held all elected branches of the U.S. government since 2006.

Trump will focus on Republicans' shared priorities, stressing plans to replace Obamacare, build a border wall, overhaul U.S. tax law and mount a $1 trillion infrastructure program, Conway said. It is the first trip outside Washington for Trump since he was inaugurated, and his first flight on Air Force One as president.

Congressional Republicans are especially eager to hear the president's intentions for legislation repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act. Trump has promised an affordable health care plan that would offer all Americans coverage, but lawmakers are uncertain how to reconcile those goals with pledges to reduce the cost of insurance and scale back government involvement in the industry.

There are also divisions within the part over the timing of legislation and how to handle the Medicaid program that provides health care to the poor and disabled. Trump has promised to reveal his plans following confirmation of Rep.

Tom Price, a Georgia Republican, as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.Seeking Consensus

The Senate's No. 3 Republican, South Dakota Senator John Thune, said he hopes House and Senate Republicans can settle this week on a path for replacing Obamacare.

"Consensus is something we are aiming for," Thune, chairman of the Senate Republican caucus, told reporters on Tuesday. "The key is to find as much common ground as we can with regard to the substance and process, about how we proceed going forward."

Interim House Budget Committee Chairman Diane Black told reporters Wednesday she expects committees to begin marking up repeal-and-replace legislation "in the next two weeks."

Much of Trump's agenda will require congressional backing. In an executive order signed Wednesday, Trump laid out plans to ask Congress for more money to hire additional border patrol agents, immigration officers, and to construct a wall on the Mexican border.

House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said they anticipate approving Trump's wall as part of a $12 billion to $15 billion supplemental spending bill for border security.

"The point is, we're going to finance the Secure Fence Act, which is the construction of a physical barrier on the border," Ryan told reporters at a news conference in Philadelphia.Tax Reform

Trump has also advocated broad corporate tax reform, which the president says can jump-start the economy and encourage businesses to invest in American manufacturing. But Trump has already publicly split with Ryan over key provisions, including House Republican plans for a border adjustment tax.

Ryan told his members on Wednesday that he expected work on the tax package to occur in the summer, after Congress tackles an Obamacare repeal.

But the split over taxes underscores the uneasy alliance between Trump and Republican leaders on Capitol Hill. During the campaign, Ryan was openly reluctant to endorse the party nominee and told lawmakers they could abandon their own support for Trump after disclosure of a video in which the nominee was heard explicitly discussing female anatomy and his own behavior toward women.

In a stream of October tweets, Trump called Ryan "weak and ineffective" and berated him for his disloyalty.

Trump's Vow To G.O.P. Lawmakers: 'You're Not Wasting Your Time'

By Michael D. Shear And Matt Flegenheimer

New York Times, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — President Trump pledged allegiance to a long list of Republican agenda items on Thursday, telling a gathering of the party's lawmakers that, together, they will repeal the Affordable Care Act, lower taxes for businesses and the middle class, rebuild crumbling infrastructure and create millions of jobs.

"This Congress is going to be the busiest Congress we've had in decades, maybe ever," Mr. Trump said at a Republican retreat here. Gesturing to House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, Mr. Trump said: "He's writing his heart out. And we're actually going to sign the stuff that you're writing. You're not wasting your time."

The president was met warmly in the room, particularly as he checked off the cabinet members and nominees who came from the congressional ranks — among them Mike Pompeo, the Kansas congressman-turned-C.I.A. director.

"It's like being actually led into the Promised Land by Moses," Representative Tom Cole, a senior Republican from Oklahoma, said of Mr. Trump. "We're there and he's our leader and people feel very comfortable."

Aides said Mr. Trump made the trip so he could reach out to lawmakers to advance a legislative agenda in the weeks ahead. In his remarks, he bragged about having moved quickly on a series of executive actions covering areas like immigration, the environment and trade. But he said that broader changes would require legislation.

As Air Force One landed, Mr. Trump learned that President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico had canceled a planned visit to the White House next week, providing yet another distraction for a president whose first week has been filled with them.

In his remarks, Mr. Trump described the cancellation as a joint decision. "We have agreed to cancel our planned meeting," he said. "Unless Mexico is going to treat the United States fairly, with respect, such a meeting would be fruitless and I want to go a different route. We have no choice."

Though Mr. Trump's unpredictable behavior and scattershot policy has continued to catch lawmakers off guard, Republican leaders have taken care to project an air of unity since his election. "We are on the same page with the White House," Mr. Ryan insisted on Thursday, speaking to reporters before Mr. Trump's visit.

Mr. Ryan did say that Mr. Trump, on Twitter and otherwise, had compelled members to adjust their expectations of the White House. "This is going to be an unconventional presidency," the speaker said. "That is something we are all going to have to get used to."

Mr. Trump arrived in Philadelphia after his first official flight on Air Force One. He got a short tour of the plane after arriving at Joint Base Andrews on Marine One, aides said. After getting off the helicopter, he saluted and then walked up the stairs to the plane.

The president had already given up his Boeing 757; when he flew down to Washington from New York the day before his inauguration, he flew on a government plane — not officially Air Force One because he had not yet become president.

In his remarks, Mr. Trump told lawmakers that the American people had decided in the election that they wanted change. He bragged about his surprise victory, calling it a great night.

"Now we have to deliver," the president said. "Enough all talk, no action. We have to deliver. This is our chance to achieve great and lasting change for our beloved nation."

Mr. Trump received several standing ovations from the members of his party, including when he talked about ending overseas aide to groups that support abortion, rebuilding the military and eliminating regulations on the discovery and production of energy. The lawmakers also applauded when he pledged to keep working toward construction of his long-promised wall along the Mexican border.

Negotiations on the wall speak to how much Republicans appear willing to break with past positions on government spending to accommodate Mr. Trump. Though many have long shared Mr. Trump's desire for a border wall, Republicans in Congress have often railed against spending plans that do not include offsetting cuts, even in emergency situations like a natural disaster.

Mr. Ryan and Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, estimated on Thursday that Mr. Trump's wall would cost $12 billion to $15 billion. They declined to address whether the expense would be offset by spending cuts.

Mr. McConnell also shrugged off questions on whether Mr. Trump was compromising the United States' relationship with Mexico by continuing to insist that Mexico will pay for the wall. (For now, Mr. Ryan suggested, the wall will be paid for with a supplemental funding request from the White House and existing federal funding to secure the border.)

"We intend to address the wall issue ourselves," Mr. McConnell said, "and the president can deal with his relations with other countries on that issue and other issues."

Mr. Trump, who has had a rocky relationship with Mr. McConnell and Mr. Ryan at times, went out of his way to praise both men. He called Mr. McConnell "a great guy" and said Mr. Ryan was "very, very special."

Many questions about the specifics of legislative aims remained unanswered. But as Mr. Trump greeted them here, Republicans seemed content this week to revel in the early planning stages, and in their victory.

"Everybody's excited," Mr. Cole said. "Nobody's hit the hard parts yet."

Trump To GOP Lawmakers: 'We Have To Deliver'

By S.A. Miller

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump declared Thursday that the days of a do-nothing Congress are over.

"Enough all talk, no action. We have to deliver," Mr. Trump said in a speech to Capitol Hill Republicans at a strategy retreat in Philadelphia.

He told the House and Senate members that that they would be busy — perhaps the busiest Congress in history — passing an ambitious agenda aimed at returning power to the American people.

"This Congress is going to be the busiest Congress we've had in decades, maybe ever," he told the lawmakers in a ballroom of the Loews hotel.

"Now is the dawn of a new era of American independence and re-dedication to the idea that the people are in charge of their own destiny," he said.

"Think of everything we can achieve and remember who we must achieve it for. We are here now because tens of millions of Americans have placed their hopes in us to transfer power from Washington, D.C., and give it back to the people," Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Trump, who enjoys having his party in control of both chambers of Congress, outlined an agenda that included immigration, trade, taxes and reducing crime in cities.

At the top of the agenda were plans to repeal Obamacare.

"Obamacare is a disaster," he said.

Mr. Trump said that Obamacare would "explode" on its own if they left it as it is for two years, and he predicted that Democrats would "come begging" to replace it.

"Except we have one problem — we have to take care of the American people immediately," he said.

Mr. Trump said that House Speaker Paul Ryan and other GOP leaders had been hard at work writing legislation to send to the White House.

"We are actually going to sign the stuff you are writing. You are not wasting your time," he said, adding that for years "you'd write it and send it up and nothing would happen. But now it's going to happen."

"Now is the dawn of a new era of American independence and re-dedication to the idea that the people are in charge of their own destiny," said Mr. Trump.

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Trump Says Current Congress Could Be The Busiest In History

By Marisa Schultz

New York Post, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA – President Trump told Republican members of Congress they'll be busier than ever now that he's running the White House.

"This Congress is going to be the busiest Congress we've had in decades, maybe ever!" Trump said Thursday at the annual Republican retreat here.

Striking a populist message, Trump told lawmakers to remember who they're working for. It's time, he said, to "restore the rule of law and return power to everyday Americans."

Trump noted Speaker Paul Ryan, a policy wonk, can now write legislation that will become law in the GOP-controlled Congress.

"He's writing his heart out," Trump said. "We're actually going to sign the stuff you are writing… he's not wasting his time."

In one comedic moment, Trump was searching the crowd for former Rep. Mike Pompeo, just sworn in CIA director and therefore not part of the congressional retreat.

"Where is Pompeo? Where the hell is he?" Trump said looking around.

"Oh, he's working."

Trump's visit comes as House and Senate GOP leaders huddle for three days to plot how to repeal and replace Obamacare, devise tax reform, pass funding for Trump's border wall and revisit trade agreements with Mexico and Britain.

Trump's motorcade was greeted by thousands of protesters as he rolled into the downtown Loews Hotel in Philadelphia.

Some yelled: "We hate you!" and "Go home!"

Trump earned applause from lawmakers for his recent executive actions to revive the Keystone and Dakota Access pipelines, bar US funding for foreign aid groups that support abortion and cracking down on sanctuary cities.

"The hour of justice for the American worker has arrived," Trump said.

The commander-in-chief outlined his new approach for trade deals: one-on-one pacts with countries rather than large deals with several nations. If countries aren't treating America fairly, he pledged to send them a 30-day "termination" notice.

Trump drew chuckles from the crowd when he wished his Commerce Secretary nominee Wilbur Ross would have been approved by the Senate in time to talk trade with visiting British Prime Minister Theresa May on Friday.

"I'll have to do it myself," Trump concluded.

Trump Promises 'Busiest Congress In Decades' As GOP Rolls Out Agenda

The president addressed congressional Republicans during their annual retreat in Philadelphia.

By Gabrielle Levy, Political Reporter

U.S. News & World Report, January 26, 2017

President Donald Trump speaks as Senate Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell looks on during the Congress of Tomorrow Republican Member Retreat on Thursday in Philadelphia (Bill Clark-Pool/Getty Images)

PHILADELPHIA – President Donald Trump said Democrats should be grateful that Republicans were taking steps to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, removing what he said would be a political albatross from around their necks in a show of magnanimity.

"Every time they try to tell you about Obamacare, we're getting them out of a big jam," Trump told congressional Republicans at their annual retreat here Thursday. "We're taking a risk, taking it off their plates."

Trump said he had considered letting the law – which Republicans regularly say is "collapsing" and hurting millions of Americans – limp along for the next two years so they could use it as a political cudgel in the 2018 elections.

[READ: Trump Ordered Slew of Senior State Department Resignations, Report Says]

"I actually talked to [Speaker of the House Paul Ryan] about just doing nothing for two years and Democrats would come begging to do something," Trump said. "In two years, it would explode like you've never seen an explosion. That's politically what we should do."

Speaking for about 25 minutes in a downtown Philadelphia hotel ballroom, Trump also bragged about winning Pennsylvania after so many of his fellow Republicans tried and failed to do so for the past several decades.

He predicted the upcoming term would be the "busiest Congress in decades, maybe ever," that had a "chance to deliver lasting change for our beloved nation."

And he characterized the canceled meeting with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto as a mutual decision to postpone, after Pena Nieto publicly announced he would not visit Washington in light of Trump's insistence Mexico would pay to build a wall along the border.

RELATED CONTENT Tiffany Trump, Steve Bannon, Steven Mnuchin Registered to Vote in Multiple States

[RELATED: Tiffany Trump, Steve Bannon, Steven Mnuchin Registered to Vote in Multiple States]

His border wall, and his decision to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a 12-nation free trade agreement that would have been the largest in the world, were steps to "restore the civil rights of Americans, to protect their jobs, their hopes and their dreams, for their future," Trump said.

At one point, he repeated his promise to reduce crime in the "inner cities," such as Chicago, where he has said he would "send in the feds" if the Windy City "doesn't fix the horrible carnage."

"What's going on in Chicago? What the hell is going on?" he said to lawmakers. A member in the audience shouted "Democrats!" to laughter in the room.

And he hinted at his complaints about voter fraud, which he claims was behind millions of illegal votes and cost him the popular vote in November's election.

"We need to keep the ballot box safe from illegal voting," he said. "We're going to protect the integrity of the ballot box and protect the votes of the American citizen."

Tags: Donald Trump, Republican Party, Congress, politics

Pence Tells Congress To 'Buckle Up' And Get Ready To Enact Major Change

By Erin Kelly

USA Today, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — Vice President Mike Pence told Republican members of Congress on Thursday to "buckle up" and get ready to work with the new Trump administration on everything from repealing Obamacare to confirming a "strict constructionist" to fill the Supreme Court.

"My friends, this is our moment," he told lawmakers at a GOP congressional retreat in downtown Philadelphia.. "We got this far because President Donald Trump marshaled a movement unlike any movement in American history."

Pence, a former congressman and Indiana governor, said the challenges facing Congress and the White House are large and urgent.

"President Trump and I will forge a strong working relationship with the Congress and with all of you to enact the laws that will serve the American people," the vice president said, promising not to "bypass" Congress as he accused the Obama administration of doing. "We're all one party and we're all striving to achieve the same objective."

In addition to writing a new health care law to replace the Affordable Care Act, Pence said the administration's top goals are boosting military spending; improving and expanding America's highways, bridges, airports and public transit systems; and cutting government regulations. Congressional leaders have been talking about a nearly identical agenda at their retreat this week.

Pence, who will be attending the March for Life anti-abortion event in Washington on Friday, said he he was especially happy that Trump signed an executive order restoring a ban on giving U.S. funds to international groups that provide or discuss abortion services. Pence will become the highest-ranking government official to speak in person at the annual march.

"Just this week, this pro-life president reinstated the Mexico City policy banning public funding of abortion," he said. "As another pro-life American, I couldn't be more proud."

Pence said he was glad to be back in Pennsylvania, which gave Trump an upset victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton in the Nov. 8 election.

"We owe Pennsylvania a debt of gratitude and thanks," he said. "We also have to return the favor. We need to repay the hard working people of Pennsylvania and people everywhere who yearn for a better future."

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., called Pence "the epitome of a happy warrior" as he introduced the vice president at the retreat.

"Mike Pence is the glue that keeps us all together focused and fixed on our shared timelines and challenges," Ryan said. "He makes all of us better."

VP Mike Pence: President Trump, Congress Are In The 'Promise-keeping Business'

By David Sherfinski

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

Vice President Mike Pence told Republicans gathered in Philadelphia Thursday that President Trump and Capitol Hill lawmakers are in the "promise-keeping business" and that he and the president have a "profound respect" for Congress's constitutional role in government.

"Make no mistake about it: this president and this Congress are in the promise-keeping business," Mr. Pence said. "We're going to show the American people that the Republican party has the principles and the policies that will make America great again."

He credited Mr. Trump for spurring on an unprecedented movement in last year's presidential campaign.

"My friends, this is our moment," Mr. Pence said. "And we got this far because President Donald Trump marshaled a movement unlike any movement in American history."

He said he and Mr. Trump have a "profound respect" for Congress's constitutional role.

"So I can say unequivocally that President Trump and I will forge a strong working relationship with the Congress and with all of you to enact the laws that will serve the interests of the American people as contemplated by the Constitution of the United States," he said to applause.

Many Republicans have criticized former President Obama for going around Congress with executive actions on issues such as immigration.

Mr. Pence said he hoped the Senate would move quickly on Mr. Trump's U.S. Supreme Court nominee. The president has said he'll be making that pick next Thursday.

"I can already tip you off. President Trump is going to keep his promise to the American people, and he's going to nominate a strict constructionist to the Supreme Court in the tradition of the late and great Justice Antonin Scalia," Mr. Pence said to applause.

"This person will possess a top-notch legal mind and unwavering commitment to the Constitution," he said. "We

need this person on the bench as soon as possible given the vacancy that's existed on the court."

Mr. Pence also joked about the comparatively smaller crowds he attracted on the campaign trail compared to Mr. Trump, who spoke at the GOP retreat earlier in the day.

The vice president said he'd attend rallies with Mr. Trump where "tens of thousands" people would come out.

"Or I'd speak at rallies of my own, where literally hundreds of Americans would come out to hear me campaign on his behalf," he said to laughter.

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GOP Airs Old Grievances In Private Pence Meeting

By Rachael Bade

Politico, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — Congressional Republicans used a private audience with Vice President Mike Pence on Thursday to rehash years-old political controversies — even suggesting Pence fire the IRS commissioner, according to sources in the room.

At the GOP retreat here in Philadelphia, a handful of the House's most conservative lawmakers peppered Pence with questions on topics ranging from the 2012 Benghazi terrorist attack to the 2013 IRS tea party-targeting scandal. One member also applauded President Donald Trump's insistence that widespread voter fraud occurred during the 2016 election, offering up congressional help in any investigative.

It's a sign that while Republicans might control the levers of power in Washington, some are having trouble moving on from old run-ins with the Obama administration.

Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-Texas) spoke during the meeting, and said the intelligence community lied about what happened in Benghazi, Libya. Sources in the room said it was hard to follow, but Pence politely thanked him and suggested he and Trump would look into it.

Rep. Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.) asked Pence if he would seek IRS Commissioner John Koskinen's resignation. House conservatives have tried to impeach the IRS chief, who they say lied to Congress during their probe of how it treated tea party nonprofits. (Koskinen says he did not.)

Pence said he'd look into the matter and follow up with DeSantis next week. Trump, however, knows Koskinen personally, and he has never called for the tax chief to be removed.

At one point, Rep. Mo Brooks (R-Ala.) stood up to say that Trump "may be spot on" with his claims that more than 3 million people voted illegally — a claim he has repeated numerous times despite the fact that there is no evidence to support it.

Most GOP leaders have been crossing their fingers that Trump will move on from his obsession with the results of the popular vote — given that he won and is now in the leader of the most powerful nation in the world. But Brooks asked Pence what Congress could do.

Pence told him there would be an investigation to settle people's concerns, but left it at that.

Trump Seems To Embrace Key GOP Tax Proposal

By John T. Bennett, Lindsey McPherson

Roll Call, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — President Donald Trump appeared to endorse a key House Republican tax proposal as he continued his opening-week charm offensive Thursday, also telling GOP lawmakers he stands "shoulder-to-shoulder" with them.

And the new chief executive, during his first domestic trip since being sworn in last Friday, predicted this Congress will be the "busiest" in decades.

During his first six days as America's 45th president, the former reality television star and businessman has flashed both his bombastic campaigning style and a warm, joke-cracking persona in social and business meetings. So it was an open question as to which Trump would arrive in Philadelphia to address his fellow Republicans, on whom he will depend to pass his policy agenda.

What GOP members got was the charmer in chief.

Rather than blast Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto for canceling a meeting at the White House next Tuesday over a flap stemming from Trump's border wall executive order, he claimed the decision to scrub the session was mutual.

His press secretary, Sean Spicer, revealed more details about how Trump intends to pay for his border wall.

"When you look at the plan that's taking shape now, using comprehensive tax reform as a means to tax imports from countries that we have a trade deficit from, like Mexico," Spicer said on Air Force One, according to reporters traveling with Trump. "If you tax that $50 billion at 20 percent of imports – which is, by the way, a practice that 160 other countries do – right now, our country's policy is to tax exports and let imports flow freely in, which is ridiculous. By doing … that, we can do $10 billion a year and easily pay for the wall just through that mechanism alone. That's really going to provide the funding."

Trump joked with the House and Senate Republican leaders seated behind him on the stage, at one point even teasing Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. "Mitch, don't worry about it," Trump said with a smile after informing the crowd that "we're going to have so many trade deals" to

replace the Trans-Pacific Partnership pact that he formally pulled the United States out of this week.

[Major Trading Alliance Wobbles on Trump Border Wall]

And he drew laughs when he accused Senate Democrats of delaying votes on his Commerce Secretary-designee Wilbur Ross, which he said will impact his Friday talks with British Prime Minister Theresa May. "They want to talk trade," he said of the British. "So I'll have to handle it myself, which is OK."

In most administrations, the U.S. trade representative has actually taken the lead in negotiating trade pacts, not the Commerce secretary. The new president's pick to be USTR, Robert Lighthizer, was one of the later nomination picks he announced, on Jan. 3.

His message to the GOP members was best summed up when he told them he plans to be their "partner," vowing to "stand shoulder-to-shoulder" with them as they, together, "make America great again."

On his way back to Washington, Trump even fired off a tweet to thank the members for their "support."

https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/824698743630995457

But Trump, who unlike past presidents did not take questions after his remarks, let them know he expects them to work toward what he described as a shared legislative agenda.

He also was playful with House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, R-Wis., noting that in the past Ryan would write reams of legislative text only to see it go nowhere. "Now, it's going to happen," he promised.

"This Congress is going to be the busiest Congress we've had in decades — maybe ever," Trump said in his trademark bombast. "Think of everything we can achieve," though he urged them to remember they are doing it for "the people."

"Now we have to deliver. Enough 'all talk, no action,'" he said to tepid applause.

Before Trump took his maiden flights on the Marine One executive helicopter and Air Force One, some experts had said it was unclear whether his policy ideology and agenda neatly aligned with that of congressional Republicans. To that end, he seemed to embrace House Republicans' border adjustment tax proposal.

"I want to go a different route. We have no choice," he said of America's trade deals with Mexico. "Paul Ryan and other leaders in Congress and I and Mike Pence … we're working on a tax reform bill that will reduce our trade deficits, increase American exports and will generate revenue from Mexico that will pay for the wall if decide to go that route."

Ryan, when asked Thursday before Trump's speech if Trump had told him specifically that he likes the border adjustment proposal, said, "We're in a very good place on tax reform."

"It can get complicated when you get into the details of tax reform, but once we go through how tax reform works and what it's going to take to get the kind of competitive tax system, the kind of competitive tax rates, I think most people agree that this is the right approach," Ryan said.

House Republicans' tax overhaul blueprint calls for a cash-flow based tax system that would remove the existing tax on exports and institute a tax on imports, regardless of where the product originates. This provision, which they refer to as "border adjustability," is designed to allow the U.S. to compete with foreign countries that have Value Added Taxes (VATs) or similar tax systems that tax imports.

[Who's Going to Pay for the Wall? Congress!]

Republicans argue that U.S. companies that make products here and sell them overseas are at a disadvantage because they are double taxed, paying the U.S. an export tax and the destination country an import tax.

Trump's apparent endorsement of the proposal came just hours before he is slated to meet with Rep. Kevin Brady of Texas and Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah in the Oval Office. Those Republicans are the chairmen of the House and Senate's tax-writing committees. Notably, Brady has been engaged in a public tour lately talking up the border adjustment proposal.

Illinois Rep. Peter Roskam, chairman of the Ways and Means subcommittee on tax policy, said earlier Thursday that Trump's proposal for a 35 percent border tax was not the same thing as what House Republicans were proposing in their blueprint, but that he believed the president would eventually come to their side.

"I think when it all comes down to it, Donald Trump looks at this and says, 'I will support this,'" Roskam said, adding, "In the great scheme of things there's not many other options that don't get you into a trade war."

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Donald Trump And Republicans Strain To Set Agenda

President and congressional leaders fall short of agreement on taxes, Mexico, probing the election

By Kristina Peterson And Richard Rubin

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

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GOP Leaders Eye Health Care, Tax Overhaul By August Recess

Paul Ryan insists: 'We are on the same page as the White House'

By Tom Howell Jr.

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

Congressional Republicans leaders outlined an aggressive agenda Thursday for the first 200 days of their partnership with President Trump, pledging to overhaul the U.S. health care and tax systems while looking for up to $15 billion to pay for Mr. Trump's border wall with Mexico.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said their troops are huddling at a Philadelphia retreat with an eye on fulfilling each of the pledges they made to voters ahead of the November election.

The president and Vice President Mike Pence are scheduled to address their Capitol Hill partners later in the day.

"We are on the same page as the White House," Mr. Ryan said in a press conference. "We've been working with the administration on a daily basis to map out and plan a very bold and aggressive agenda to make good on our campaign promises."

Still, Mr. Trump is striking out on unusual tangents in the early days of his presidency. He disputed reports about the size of his Inauguration Day crowds and suggested up to 5 million illegal votes cost him the popular-vote race against Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. Mr. Trump won the Electoral College.

Mr. Trump's sparred with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto over who will pay for his southern border wall, and suggested he's open to using enhanced interrogation techniques on suspected terrorists that many equate with torture, forcing GOP leaders to respond.

"Torture's not legal, and we agree with it not being legal," Mr. Ryan said.

Republicans will also meet Thursday with British Prime Minister Theresa May to discuss a bilateral trade agreement, as the U.S. ally strikes out on its own after its vote to "Brexit" from the European Union.

On health care, the party is banking on a three-pronged strategy. It plans to gut the law by late February or early March by using a fast-track budget process that allows it to avoid a Democratic filibuster in the Senate, while replacing as much of the law as it can on that bill.

Rep. Diane Black, Tennessee Republican, said they might use the process, known as "reconciliation," to promote tax-advantaged savings accounts that allow Americans to save up for medical care and prescription drugs.

Republicans will then rely on the Trump administration to lift some of Obamacare mandates and rules during the transition to piece-by-piece replacement bills, although that legislation will require votes from Senate Democrats.

Mr. Trump's has signaled he will submit his own health plan once his pick to lead the Health and Human Services Department, Rep. Tom Price, is in place, while several Republicans have floated their own plans.

That's left Republicans to sift through the various strands and coalesce around a unified strategy to fulfill their campaign promise to repeal and replace President Obama's signature law. They say the 2010 overhaul is hurting American families right now, through soaring premiums and dwindling choices on its web-based insurance exchanges, so relief is needed.

On tax reform, Mr. Ryan said the process will be complicated, but ultimately they will make U.S. rates more competitive with other countries'.

"Most people agree that this is the right approach," he said.

Mr. McConnell also said he would like to return to the normal spending process in the coming months, despite Congress' jam-packed agenda, after years of relying on stop-gap funding bills. The leader made the same vow last year, though intra-GOP bickering and Democratic opposition stalled appropriations bills.

"We hope we can have some semblance of a regular order, even with all of this," Mr. McConnell said.

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Mitch McConnell Caught Between Trump, Republican-led Congress

By Curtis Tate

McClatchy, January 26, 2017

Mitch McConnell's got what he has long sought: Republicans controlling Congress and the White House. But he's heading down a bumpy, unpredictable road.

That became clear Thursday as Republicans conducted a second day of strategy meetings here, including sessions with President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence. Instead of a celebration and a momentum-building rally, the sessions exposed why the GOP is in for some rough times.

McConnell, the Senate majority leader, is caught between conflicting interests. Restless Republican conservatives want the always-deliberative Senate to move faster. Senate Republicans are hardly unified, and because the GOP controls 52 of the 100 seats, it takes only three dissenters to derail a party initiative. And Trump's impulsive ways, and his marketing skills, make it hard for Congress to claim credit for change.

In the middle of all this is McConnell, the most powerful senator, as Republicans enjoy control of the legislative and executive branches for the first time in 10 years.

At the Republican meetings this week in Philadelphia, the Kentucky Republican sought to downplay potential trouble but acknowledged the challenges, starting with the impatience of the Republican conservatives in the House of Representatives. The House's most conservative members haven't forgotten that McConnell backed more mainstream

Senate candidates in recent years against tea party hard-liners.

Standing alongside his House counterpart, Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, McConnell noted Thursday that the Senate must review and approve roughly 1,200 Trump appointees, plus judicial nominees and Supreme Court justices. The House has no such task.

It also takes 60 votes in the 100-member Senate to get almost anything done, and, unlike Ryan, McConnell needs Democrats to get him there.

"The speaker understands the challenge of getting things through the Senate," McConnell said. "We have all this other responsibility the House doesn't have."

As before, McConnell said he wouldn't comment on Trump's latest outbursts, though he has expressed confidence he can keep his members in line.

"I've got 52 members, and almost all of them are what I would call members of the constructive caucus," McConnell told McClatchy in a recent interview.

On Thursday, Mexico's President, Enrique Peña Nieto, canceled his planned White House visit over Trump's aggressive pursuit of a U.S.-Mexico border wall, renegotiated trade deals and increased deportations of immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally.

"I don't have any advice to give to the president about that issue," McConnell said.

EDITORS: BEGIN OPTIONAL TRIM

McConnell did push back, though, on Trump's statements that suggested he might revive enhanced interrogations of terrorism suspects. In an ABC News interview Wednesday, Trump said the U.S. should "fight fire with fire" and that torture "absolutely works."

Intelligence experts have cast doubt on the effectiveness and the legality of such practices, including waterboarding. Even CIA Director Mike Pompeo, who in the past had defended the techniques, has pledged that the agency will not resume using them.

"The director of the CIA has made it clear he's going to follow the law," McConnell said.

Trump has already signed executive orders relating to health care, energy and immigration. Republican lawmakers often complained when then-President Barack Obama invoked his executive power, and Trump's willingness to bypass Congress on certain matters might set up conflicts within the party.

That could create more tension among Senate Republicans, meaning McConnell has to keep an eye on his ranks, who have their own often-disparate ideas about health care, infrastructure and foreign policy.

Earlier this week, four Republican senators introduced a bill to allow states to keep the Affordable Care Act if they choose, a departure from the full repeal of Obama's signature legislative achievement long sought by many in their party.

Also earlier this week, McConnell's Kentucky colleague Rand Paul – who offered his own health care plan Wednesday – was the lone Senate Republican to vote against Pompeo's confirmation, citing concerns about torture.

The Senate has yet to vote on Rex Tillerson's nomination to be secretary of state. Some Senate Republicans have expressed concerns about the former Exxon Mobil CEO's ties to Russia. A vote to limit debate on the nomination is scheduled for Monday evening.

Trump wants to rebuild the country's infrastructure and marshal a trillion dollars to do it, but some lawmakers will be reluctant to loosen the purse strings.

"There will be some Republicans, more ideological than conservative, who will say the federal government should not be involved in infrastructure," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. "I'm not in that camp."

Trump wants to launch an investigation into voter fraud in the presidential election. He won the electoral vote but lost the popular vote. He's dismissed a U.S. intelligence analysis that found evidence of Russian interference in the election, but some Republicans on Capitol Hill aren't ready to let it go.

"I am not in the forgive-and-forget category when it comes to Russia, about what they did in our election," Graham said.

On Thursday, McConnell appeared to be sympathetic to lawmakers who felt they'd been shut out of the process during the Obama presidency. "Most members don't like being completely irrelevant," he said.

But he also seemed to warn Trump that Congress wouldn't be a rubber stamp.

"We're not going to hand this (president) a blank check, either," McConnell said.

Trump To G.O.P. Gathering: Where's My C.I.A. Director?

By Matthew Rosenberg, Maggie Haberman And Gardiner Harris

New York Times, January 26, 2017

■ President Trump, at a political gathering of congressional Republicans, asks, "Where's my C.I.A. director?"

■ A new Quinnipiac University poll put President Trump's approval rating at 36 percent, compared to Barack Obama's 59 percent in the opening weeks of his presidency.

■ The professional golfer Bernhard Langer released a statement saying he never told President Trump a story of voter fraud that Mr. Trump relayed to congressional leaders.

President Trump may be unaware that America's spy chiefs are not supposed to be creatures of partisan politics.

Speaking on Thursday in Philadelphia at an annual retreat for Republican lawmakers, Mr. Trump seemed to think Mike Pompeo, the new director of the Central Intelligence

Agency, would be among the senators, representatives and party operatives hooting and hollering in the crowd.

"Where is Pompeo? Where the hell is he?" Mr. Trump said, scanning the crowd.

The answer, in case Mr. Trump has not yet figured it out: Mr. Pompeo was not in Philadelphia.

The C.I.A., like the military, is supposed to be apolitical, and its chief does not have a direct role in creating administration policies. Though Mr. Pompeo has attended the Republican retreat in years past — he was a Republican representative before taking over the C.I.A. on Monday — it would be considered highly inappropriate for him to take part in his new role running the country's premier intelligence agency.

It was not the first time that Mr. Trump appeared to mix partisan politics and C.I.A business. He accused the C.I.A.'s previous leadership of playing politics after American intelligence agencies said they believed that Russia tried to help him win the election. Then, on Saturday, he gave a speech at C.I.A. headquarters that was filled with campaign trail rhetoric.

The speech was widely criticized by former C.I.A. officials from both Republican and Democratic administrations. But Mr. Trump, in an interview on Wednesday with ABC News, cast the visit to C.I.A. as a highlight of his first days in office.

"That speech was a home run," he said. "I got a standing ovation. In fact, they said it was the biggest standing ovation since Peyton Manning had won the Super Bowl, and they said it was equal. I got a standing ovation. It lasted for a long period of time."

President Trump, now famously touchy about his approval ratings, is not doing well on that front.

A new Quinnipiac University poll put his approval rating among American voters at 36 percent, 33 percent among women. In Quinnipiac's first poll of Barack Obama's presidency, Mr. Trump's predecessor stood at 59 percent.

Republican lawmakers who might be considering distancing themselves from their president should consider this: Mr. Trump's approval-disapproval rating among Republicans is 81 percent to 3 percent.

Independent voters are the problem. They are more split, with 45 percent disapproving and 35 percent approving of the job that the president is doing.

Gathered with the top leaders of Congress, President Trump on Monday apparently relayed the story in all seriousness: the pro golfer Bernhard Langer had told him a story that really stuck with him.

As Mr. Trump relayed it, Mr. Langer had been in line to vote in Florida when he was told by an official that he could not cast a ballot. But people all around him who looked far more suspect — Mr. Trump tossed out the names of Latin American countries that the voters might have come from — were allowed to draw up provisional ballots.

There was a problem with the story: Mr. Langer is a German citizen.

But Mr. Langer says he never talked to Mr. Trump, that he was told the story by a friend, then told the story to a friend who told it to someone with ties to the White House — who apparently told it to Mr. Trump. He certainly never tried to vote in Florida.

So, if the story was important to Mr. Trump's erroneous belief that millions of illegal immigrants gave Hillary Clinton her 2.8 million-ballot win in the popular vote, it was based on fourth-hand information.

There's a slight problem with President Trump's Great Wall with Mexico: the Tohono O'odham Nation.

The Native American tribe controls about 75 miles of the border of the United States and Mexico that slices through its sovereign territory. Tribal leaders are already saying that the wall is not going to divide its territory.

Verlon M. Jose, the Tohono O'odham Nation's vice chairman, was not subtle when discussing the wall when he spoke in November to Native News Online: "Over my dead body."

Tribal officials did say they are willing to meet with President Trump to discuss the matter further. As Mr. Jose said:

There may be a Gingrich in the Vatican just yet.

Callista Gingrich, the wife of Newt Gingrich, the former House speaker and a friend of Mr. Trump's, is in the running to be ambassador to the Holy See, according to a person briefed on the discussions.

Mr. Gingrich, reached by telephone, said that he was aware that his wife had been on a list for the job, but declined to say where things stood. The former speaker took himself out of the running for a cabinet post after it became clear that Mr. Trump was looking elsewhere for a secretary of state.

Mr. Trump has known Newt and Callista Gingrich socially for years. They're members of his golf club in Virginia, and have been at his club, Mar-a-Lago, in Palm Beach, Fla. Mr. Gingrich was one of the people Mr. Trump consulted in 2015 when he had already determined he would run for president.

But Mrs. Gingrich is the former speaker's third wife — not something the church takes a shine to. Others who are being considered for the role include William Simon Jr., a friend of Rudolph W. Giuliani.

Four senior management officials at the State Department resigned on Wednesday, leaving the department without the top managers charged with running the administrative, consular and foreign mission operations until their successors are in place.

"As is standard with every transition, the outgoing administration, in coordination with the incoming one,

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requested all politically appointed officers submit letters of resignation," Mark Toner, the department's acting spokesman, said in a statement, adding: "Of the officers whose resignations were accepted, some will continue in the foreign service in other positions, and others will retire by choice or because they have exceeded the time limits of their grade in service."

The most senior official to leave is Patrick F. Kennedy, the department's longtime undersecretary for management, who oversees finances, security, facilities and consular services.

But his departure had been expected, in part because of his vigorous defense of then-Secretary of State Hillary's Clinton's handling of the attack on the diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya. He also sought the F.B.I.'s help in downgrading the security classification of an email from Mrs. Clinton's private server.

Rex Tillerson, nominated to be secretary of state, is not expected to be confirmed by the Senate until next week. Nominations for the department's deputy positions have yet to be announced or submitted.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan and Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, said Thursday morning that in spite of President Trump's perpetual tweet storms, distracting television interviews, occasional lies, and intraparty slights, they are with him on policy.

"We are on the same page with the White House," Mr. Ryan told reporters in Philadelphia, before a visit from Mr. Trump to the congressional Republican's policy conference.

On the list: a costly wall along the border with Mexico, which Mr. Ryan said would be paid for with a supplemental funding request from the White House and existing federal funding to secure the border. Also on the list is a new tax code and a replacement for the Affordable Care Act — easy! (Remember, Congress dithered for weeks and months to scrape together aid for the victims of tropical storm Sandy, to combat the Zika virus and to help the lead-poisoned residents of Flint, Mich., while conservatives looked for offsetting spending cuts.)

As for Trump's distractions, the leaders seemed to say that's his special sideshow. "This is going to be an unconventional presidency," Mr. Ryan conceded, adding, "that is something we are all going to have to get used to."

Mr. McConnell also shrugged off questions about Mr. Trump compromising the United States' relationship with Mexico. "We intend to address the wall issue ourselves, and the president can deal with his relations with other countries on that issue and other issues," Mr. McConnell said.

The Republican chairmen of the House and Senate veterans' affairs committees dashed off a letter to President Trump Thursday demanding to know whether his executive order freezing federal hiring applied to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Surely you didn't mean the department under our jurisdiction, suggested Senator Johnny Isakson of Georgia and Representative Phil Roe of Tennessee:

Don't be surprised if more such letters emerge as the hiring freeze starts to bite.

In a week in which President Trump is busy unraveling much of Barack Obama's legacy, the former president was defended from an unusual quarter Thursday morning: Mr. Trump.

In an early-morning post on Twitter, Mr. Trump expressed outrage that Chelsea Manning, the former Army intelligence analyst whose sentence for leaking American secrets was commuted by Mr. Obama, had criticized the 44th president for not being strong enough.

Even though Mr. Trump repeatedly characterized Mr. Obama the same way during last year's campaign — "weak attitude and pathetic president," "so weak and so bad," "he's been weak, he's been ineffective" — he evidently thought Ms. Manning was ungracious to do so.

Mr. Trump seemed to be referring to a column that Ms. Manning wrote in The Guardian newspaper, in which she argued that Mr. Obama left "very few permanent accomplishments" because he was too willing to compromise. The column was largely a criticism of Republicans never giving Mr. Obama a chance, but it suggested that he had not been strong enough to resist them.

"The one simple lesson to draw from President Obama's legacy: Do not start off with a compromise," Ms. Manning wrote. "They won't meet you in the middle. Instead, what we need is an unapologetic progressive leader."

Wonder where Mr. Trump got his idea?

As Trump Thunders, G.O.P. Lawmakers Duck And Cover

By Matt Flegenheimer

New York Times, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — For months, the strategies have been tested and recalibrated — the senatorial speed-walk, the bemused deflection, the jittery laughter — honed through a presidential campaign season of refutable claims, racially charged rhetoric and tape-recorded boasts of sexual assault.

So when President Trump and his team began their White House tenure with two whoppers, doubling down on false claims about his inauguration crowd and illegal voting in the election, Republicans on Capitol Hill this week assumed their positions.

Senator Mitch McConnell, the majority leader, chose to answer a question no one had asked, arguing that voter fraud "does occur" while declining to address Mr. Trump's assertion that millions of fraudulent votes had cost him the popular vote.

Speaker Paul D. Ryan allowed that he had seen no evidence of wide-scale fraud, before retreating into a familiar self-assessment ("I'm a policy guy") to declare himself above the fray.

Senator Thom Tillis, Republican of North Carolina, distinguished himself with the most adorable distraction: He cradled a Boston terrier puppy, stroking her chin, as he greeted reporters eager to ask about Mr. Trump this week in the basement of the Capitol.

"Her name is Tilly," he said, before politely shrugging off questions about Mr. Trump.

The first several days of the Trump presidency have reinforced several core truths: He will continue to give voice to conspiracy theories and peddle misinformation. He will not stop obsessing over cosmetic displays of popularity, like crowd size and television ratings.

And if Republican lawmakers harbored any expectation that this ritual of the campaign cycle would end — the grimacing through questions about Mr. Trump, the hedging when asked if their party's leader had overstepped — these early days have supplied a decisive verdict: not so much.

On Thursday, Republicans are welcoming Mr. Trump to their party retreat here — the headliner of an outing that also includes Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain and Peyton Manning, the retired football star.

The event is fashioned as an off-site exercise in legislative sausage-making, with Republican members of both congressional chambers talking agenda by day and indulging in occasional cocktails by nightfall. At one of the gathering's early sessions on Wednesday, Mr. Ryan outlined the party's aggressive plan for Mr. Trump's first 200 days, including repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act over the next few months, coming up with money for a border wall and working to complete tax reform by the August recess.

Yet hanging over the proceedings, as it has since Mr. Trump stormed to the top of the polls in the Republican primaries, is the question of just how much latitude Republicans are willing to give him — in policy making or otherwise — as the party delights in the prospects of unified government, albeit with a divisive leader.

So far, dissent has been limited, and almost always cautious. Congressional leaders know, better than most, the president's power to sink fortunes with a single Twitter message.

Still, there have been early signals of where fault lines might emerge between the White House and some congressional Republicans.

The retreat began amid news reports about a draft order that would clear the way for the C.I.A. to reopen "black site" prisons, like those where the agency detained and tortured terrorism suspects before President Barack Obama shut them down.

"The president can sign whatever executive orders he likes," said Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, who was tortured as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. "But the law is the law. We are not bringing back torture in the United States of America."

Some colleagues, including those who have been less inclined to defy Mr. Trump, also sought to tweak Mr. Trump on the issue, firmly but carefully.

"With respect to torture, that's banned," Senator John Thune, Republican of South Dakota, said at the retreat. "We view that to be a matter of settled law."

Repeatedly, lawmakers have been pressed on the often mismatched messaging coming out of the White House and Capitol Hill, exacerbated at times by surprise pronouncements from Mr. Trump on Twitter.

Mr. Thune waded in gingerly, suggesting that even without Mr. Trump, Republicans were "not always on the same page."

"It's a work in progress," added Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, the highest-ranking Republican woman in the House.

A handful of members have expressed concern that Mr. Trump's behavior could wear thin. Representative Mark Sanford, Republican of South Carolina, noted Mr. Trump had thrived on presenting himself as "real" to the public.

"I think you can move from real to bizarre if you don't watch out," said Mr. Sanford, who was his state's governor when he famously disappeared to Argentina to pursue an extramarital affair. "And some of what he's done in tweet-world and others certainly fit that mold."

At the same time, Mr. Trump's baseless claims of widespread election fraud and subsequent calls for an investigation into it have attracted little blowback from fellow Republicans, who may use any inquiry as a rationale to push for more stringent voter identification laws that many of them have long supported.

Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, perhaps the most frequent Trump critic among Senate Republicans, went furthest in admonishing the president, saying Mr. Trump's claim "undermines faith in our democracy."

Others have diverged more gently, like Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, who said he saw no evidence of widespread fraud but offered the president no advice. "I can't tell Donald — uh, President Trump — how to speak or what he wants to focus on," Mr. Rubio said.

Senator John Barrasso, Republican of Wyoming, carved out an even safer position. "I have great confidence in everything that happened in Wyoming," he said, after a long pause and a moment of nervous laughter.

But at least a few lawmakers have shown greater alarm at elements of Mr. Trump's first days. Mr. Sanford recalled a recent conversation with a colleague in his party about the president's false statements on voter fraud.

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"A fellow member turned to me and pointed to it and said, 'That's what third-world dictators do,'" Mr. Sanford said. "They just repeat the same misinformation over and over and over again until it sinks in."

Mr. Sanford was asked if he shared his peer's concerns that Mr. Trump had displayed authoritarian tendencies. He paused for a beat.

"I'm going to give anybody the benefit of the doubt," he said, "over the first three days."

Trump Becomes Schmoozer-in-chief

By Jordan Fabian And Alexander Bolton

The Hill, January 26, 2017

Donald Trump has emerged from his earliest days in the White House with a new title: schmoozer-in-chief.

Trump, a Washington outsider, is hoping to build the kinds of relationships that can lead to cooperation with Republicans and Democrats that would advance his agenda.

Lawmakers who felt shunned at worst or tolerated at best by former President Barack Obama are hopeful for the change.

"We're a couple days in but it's going to be way better than what we've had during the last eight years," Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) said in an interview. "He's a builder and he wants to bring people together."

Trump so far has appeared to relish joking around with lawmakers at informal and formal events, and he'll take his effort on the road Thursday, when he will speak about his agenda in front of House and Senate Republicans' joint retreat in Philadelphia.

But it's unclear how far the new president's charm offensive will get him.

Trump's lack of impulse control and tendency to speak his mind has already gotten himself into hot water with the lawmakers he needs to woo.

That paradox was on full display on Monday afternoon, when Trump lavished congressional leaders who met with him at the White House with an assortment of fancy appetizers and drinks.

As the leaders munched on a mix of shrimp, crab, meatballs and other snacks in the State Dining Room, Trump repeated his baseless claim he lost the popular vote because millions of people illegally cast ballots for Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton.

The assertion prompted a mix of anger and pity from Democrats. "I felt sorry for him," said House Minority Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who was in the room.

It frustrated Republicans, who worry Trump's continued focus on the election could hamper their efforts to get on the same page on policy areas like healthcare reform, trade and immigration.

Trump on Wednesday expressed annoyance the conversation was leaked, a common Washington occurrence, and downplayed the degree to which it consumed the reception.

"It was so misrepresented," he told ABC News. "That was supposed to be a confidential meeting … the conversation lasted for about a minute."

Trump is also not invited to Democrats' upcoming congressional retreat in Baltimore, breaking with past practice, a sign partisan tensions aren't going away.

Despite the rocky start, Trump does not plan to shut himself in.

He plans to extend White House invitations to the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Congressional Black Caucus, which include some of his most vocal opponents, spokesman Sean Spicer said Monday.

"I think that you're gonna to see a lot more of that, a listening president who's engaged," said Spicer. "That's who he is. That's what he did during the transition. And I think that's he's gonna do going forward."

At Monday's event with congressional leaders, Trump, a teetotaler, even had alcoholic beverages on hand to loosen the mood.

Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) admitted that was pushing the envelope a little too far with the usually buttoned-down leaders. "We were all drinking Diet Cokes," he said.

Trump has tapped Vice President Mike Pence, whose six terms in the House included a stint in leadership, as his point man on Capitol Hill.

Pence on Tuesday attended the Senate Republicans' weekly conference lunch and said he would drop by regularly. The vice president is also accompanying Trump in Philadelphia.

White House chief of staff Reince Priebus, who developed close ties with GOP leaders as party chairman; and deputy chief of staff for operations Rick Dearborn, a longtime chief of staff to Trump's attorney general pick Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), are also said to be involved in congressional outreach.

While Trump is still getting to know many key players at the Capitol, he has been especially chummy with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), who has known the president for three decades.

He and Schumer spent a good chunk of time swapping stories and memories at the Monday meeting, including a 2008 fundraiser for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida.

"I asked the president, how long have you and Chuck Schumer known each other. He said, 'Chuck's been coming around for 35 years or so.' I think they know each other better than anybody else in the room,'" Cornyn said.

That Trump and Schumer come from the same place and share a history wasn't lost on the top Senate Republican.

"I enjoyed the president and Sen. Schumer talking about all the people they knew in New York," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) quipped afterwards.

Schumer, who is facing tremendous pressure from the left not to compromise with Trump, has said he won't be taken in by the charm offensive.

"The president tried to flatter me, I'm his good friend," he told reporters this week. "Then, he started calling names. None of them affect me. The bottom line is values, our values, as Democrats and Americans will affect whether I work with him or oppose him, plain and simple."

Trump's developed his taste for socializing during his decades as a New York real estate developer and reality TV star.

In his book Trump and Me, writer Mark Singer marveled at how the businessman worked a room full of dignitaries at the 1997 grand opening of the Trump International Hotel and Tower in Manhattan.

"A backlap and a wink, a finger on the lapels, no more than a minute with anyone who wasn't a police commissioner, a district attorney or a mayoral candidate," he wrote.

But then the author noticed Trump stop and thank the parking attendants before leaving. "A quintessential Trumpian gesture that explains his popularity among people who barely dare to dream of living in one of his creations," he wrote.

Obama, on the other hand, was perceived to be more cerebral and aloof, preferring to spend time with first lady Michelle Obama, his two daughters and team of close advisers.

Trump, on the other hand, is living in the White House without his wife and young son, who are in New York while he finishes the school year.

Obama wooed lawmakers early on, hosting a cocktail reception at the White House on eight days after his inauguration to lobby them on his stimulus plan. Days later he invited Republicans and Democrats for a Super Bowl party.

But the schmoozing let up — he rarely had lawmakers fly with him on Air Force One or play golf with them — and Obama soon earned a distant reputation.

In a 2012 interview with CNN, Obama denied he avoided socializing with members out of spite.

"Sometimes Michelle and I not doing the circuit and going out to dinners with folks is perceived as us being cool," he said." It actually really has more to do with us being parents."

Scott Wong, Jordain Carney and Jonathan Easley contributed.

Thousands Demonstrated Against Trump In Philly. Is This A New Era Of Perpetual Protest?

By Monica Hesse

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — The rally didn't start until 11 a.m., but Jackie Hamilton and Barb Beattie had shown up to the downtown plaza by 9:45 a.m. Planning to march in support of the Affordable Care Act, the retired schoolteachers donned attire that they sensed, wearily, would get a lot of use over the next four years.

"Ready?" asked Beattie, 68, putting on the pink knit hat she'd acquired for the Women's March in Washington just days earlier.

"I feel like we're being stirred up," said Hamilton, also 68, adjusting the pink sash she got at the same place. "Trump is stirring us up and distracting us with all of his — whatever — and meanwhile Congress . . ." She trailed off. "I'm so angry. I can't believe we're having to deal with all this stuff. Still. Again."

Several thousand protesters converged Thursday in Philadelphia, hoping to have their voices heard by President Trump and Republican members of Congress, who were meeting in a hotel blocks away to plot out their legislative agenda for the coming months.

Less than a week after Trump's inauguration inspired demonstrations — notably, the millions of marchers who descended on Washington and cities worldwide to protest his presidency — the Philadelphia gathering seemed to signal a new era of what could turn out to be perpetual protest.

And marching — an age-old protest strategy — has taken on new meaning as a tool against a leader who is uniquely preoccupied by numbers and size.

The crowd that gathered in Thomas Paine Plaza focused on one of the most aggressive measures of the new Republican administration — an effort to repeal and replace the ACA. Signs at the rally protested this plan but raised other angers as well, residual and new: "Scientists Against Trump." "Not a Journalist, and I want to see your tax returns." "Stand Up Against Alternative Facts."

Organizers said that about 5,000 people showed up in response to their invitation to try to disrupt the new president's first jaunt away from the White House. The protests appeared to unfold peacefully, with no reports of widespread arrests or clashes.

Hamilton and Beattie found a patch of concrete and tried to hear the speakers from One Pennsylvania, the coalition that had organized the rally.

"I'm honored to be here for the resistance," the first speaker yelled. "Who else is here for the resistance?"

Beattie and Hamilton yelled back that they were there for the resistance, along with the other several thousand attendees. Beattie said she was also there for her daughter, who had gone from being a healthy 33-year-old to an invalid with rheumatoid arthritis in a matter of weeks, and who was covered by the ACA. Hamilton was there because each passing day of Trump's presidency, in her opinion, seemed to

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bring a new outrage, one tumbled on top of the other. The nominee for secretary of state terrified her. The nominee for secretary of education offended her public school sensibilities.

The country seemed to be spinning out of control, and the only outlet for Beattie and Hamilton's rage was to protest, and to call their senators, and to follow the action steps sent to their inboxes every day.

"The thing about marching, is we get there, and — how much are we really affecting them?" asked Robin Gauri, a mother of young children who was standing next to Hamilton and Beattie. The first protest she'd ever attended had been the Women's March on Saturday; this was her second. "Are they even hearing us?"

"I know, but I would rather march," said her friend Judith Kaplow-Applebaum, a protest veteran of several decades. "I would rather march, even if we don't know what it's doing, even if it takes a long time. You should see — up until last week, the crowds at Philadelphia protests were minimal. Now, after him," she said, pausing to gesture to the packed plaza, where attendees spilled down side streets. "I would rather march."

One of the organizers on a loudspeaker announced that the rally would begin to move, down the streets of Philadelphia's Center City, toward the hotel where the president might hear them.

"I just got a news alert," Beattie said, showing her phone to Hamilton. "The Mexican president just canceled his visit with Trump."

They marched.

A few minutes later, Beattie got another one and read it out loud: "The State Department's entire senior management team just resigned," she said.

They marched.

Far ahead of them, the march had lurched to a stop. "Is this it?" Hamilton asked, craning her neck. "Is this where Trump is?"

"He's behind that building," the man next to her said. "He's in the Loews hotel, but they blocked it off with garbage trucks. We can't go any further."

Another chant broke out from the head of the crowd. "The people united," the caller began.

"Cannot be divided," Hamilton and Beattie joined in automatically. Hamilton yelled louder on the second round. "The people united cannot be divided."

Inside was the man they couldn't get to, planning things they didn't want to imagine. They were still angry. They were still so angry and scared.

Peyton Manning Boards The Trump Train

By Kelly Weill

Daily Beast, January 26, 2017

For nearly a year, Donald Trump's crush on Peyton Manning went unrequited, but now the former quarterback appears to have had a change of heart. Manning spoke just after Trump and Vice President Mike Pence at a Republican retreat in Philadelphia this week.

Manning, a two-time Super Bowl champion, has often given money to major Republicans, with Trump as notable exception. A donor to George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign, and Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential bid, Manning donated to primary candidate Jeb Bush in 2015, but not to the GOP's general election candidate. The announcement that Manning would join Trump and Pence at a GOP event sparked speculation that he might be considering a political career of his own.

In February 2016, Trump voiced his support for Peyton Manning.

"I very much have always liked Peyton Manning," Trump told CBS News in advance of the Super Bowl, where Manning and the Denver Broncos were due to face off against the Carolina Panthers. "He is a very good guy. I know him. And he is a very, very good guy. So, I have to go with the person I know and I like. I like the other team. I think the other team looks fantastic. Probably, they would be favored by something. But I will stick with Peyton, because he is a very good guy."

But just four months earlier, Manning and his brother Eli had both given maximum donations of $2,700 to Bush, FEC filings show. Bush, in a rare win, flaunted Manning's support, announcing that he would supporting Manning in the Super Bowl, "because he's for me." Bush later made the questionable decision of announcing — during a South Carolina rally—that he supported Manning's Broncos over the Carolina Panthers "not because of the Broncos, but because Peyton Manning wrote me a check."

More recently, Trump name-checked Manning while fending off allegations that he packed a speech to the CIA with his own staffers to give the impression of support from the intelligence community.

"I got a standing ovation," Trump told ABC's David Muir of his speech to the CIA. "In fact, they said it was the biggest standing ovation since Peyton Manning had won the Super Bowl and they said it was equal. I got a standing ovation. It lasted for a long period of time. ... I know when I do good speeches. I know when I do bad speeches. That speech was a total home run. They loved it."

Trump's son, Donald Jr. also cozied up to Manning in July, when he Instagrammed a picture of himself with the football player at a Mississippi county fair.

But Manning has previously appeared reluctant to discuss Trump.

Informed that Trump called him a "good guy" in February, Manning said he hadn't heard the compliment, but that "I've met Donald Trump, I've played a round of golf with

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him a few times out in Tahoe … The times I've been around him, he's been extremely nice to me."

Asked if he was rooting for Trump in the Iowa caucus that night, Manning replied "I'm rooting for the Broncos … I'm just a meathead football player. That's all I know."

Manning is far from apolitical, however, with over a decade of political contributions to Republican candidates. In addition to maxed-out $2,700 donation to Jeb Bush in 2015, he also gave $5,000 to Romney Victory, Inc. in November 2012, and the maximum $2,000 to George W. Bush's reelection campaign in 2004. He is also a frequent donor to Republicans in Tennessee, where he attended college (and where he was accused of pushing his genitals against a female trainer's face).

In 2006 and 2009, Manning donated to campaigns for Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee, whom Trump reportedly considered for Secretary of State, before allegedly nixing the 5'7" legislator as too short for the post. Trump's team also reportedly worried about allegations that Corker had used his used his office to invest in companies owned by friends and donors.

Manning also gave $2,600 to Senator Lamar Alexander's reelection campaign, and $2,300 to the doomed 2008 presidential campaign of Law & Order actor-turned-Tennessee Senator Fred Thompson.

The ex-quarterback's longtime political involvement, plus his carefully maintained image (minus the allegations that he pushed his genitals against a female trainer's face), might make the newly retired Manning a prime candidate for a political career. In March, he and his brother Eli are scheduled to speak at an annual luncheon hosted by the Long Island Association, a business group that has previously hosted George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Dick Cheney, and Rudy Giuliani.

Trump Delays Signing Order To Investigate Unfounded Voter Fraud Claims

By David Jackson And Gregory Korte

USA Today, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON — President Trump will not sign an executive order today launching an investigation into unfounded claims of massive voter fraud that Trump says have produced up to 5 million illegal votes in last year's election.

Trump had planned to sign the order Thursday, but White House spokesman Sean Spicer said it has been delayed because the president's schedule got backed up.

"It will be a follow up on the announcement yesterday of his commitment to better understand voter fraud, faulty registration, et cetera," Spicer had said earlier in the day.

The order would be the latest move in a saga that began Monday night, when Trump told members of Congress that 3 million to 5 million illegal voters cost him the popular vote against Clinton. He repeated the unsupported assertion in an interview with ABC News on Wednesday — complaining that his remarks were intended to be confidential, and claiming he would have won the popular vote if not for fraud.

"There are millions of votes, in my opinion," he said. "And I will say this, of those votes cast, none of 'em come to me. None of 'em come to me. They would all be for the other side."

Congressional leaders and election officials from both parties have said there's no evidence to back Trump's claims.

Read more:

Trump falsely attributed his claims to a 2012 report by the Pew Center on the States on problems with voter registration, including outdated, inaccurate or duplicate registrations. But that study, first reported by USA TODAY, contained no evidence of voter fraud or criminal intent, instead attributing the problem to a broken and bureaucratic system of decentralized election administration.

Whenever a voter moves to a new county or state, for example, it's up to the new jurisdiction to notify the old one of the change of address so that the old registration can be canceled. That often doesn't happen, leading to duplicate registrations — as has apparently happened with senior Trump aide Stephen Bannon, daughter Tiffany Trump and son-in-law Jared Kushner, who is now a senior adviser to the president.

Trump tweeted Wednesday said he would order an investigation into voter fraud. Spicer later said the White House was thinking more in terms of a study of the issue.

Participants in the meeting in which Trump claimed illegal voters told The New York Times that the president buttressed his claim with a story from Bernhard Langer, a professional golfer who supposedly waited in an Election Day line with people who didn't look like they belonged there.

Langer said the story has been distorted, describing it as he would the children's game of "telephone" in which he was just one participant. He noted that he is German and therefore ineligible to vote in the United States.

"The voting situation reported was not conveyed from me to President Trump, but rather was told to me by a friend," Langer said in a statement reported by the Golf Channel. "I then relayed the story in conversation with another friend, who shared it with a person with ties to the White House. From there, this was misconstrued."

The Justice Department, which would investigate violations of the federal voting rights laws, has declined to comment on Trump's call for an inquiry and his assertion that up to 5 million illegal immigrants voted in the general election.

Prior to Election Day, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division deployed more than 500 people to 28 states

to monitor voting. Every state has completed post-election audits of votes with no reports of significant voter fraud.

Afterward, Justice officials announced no major incidents of voter fraud, let alone mass numbers of undocumented immigrants attempting to vote.

Civil rights groups fear that the Trump administration's emphasis on voter fraud is a precursor to more restrictive voting registration laws.

"We understand that there is a long history of Republican politicians spreading lies about statistically negligible voter fraud in order to justify very real voter suppression laws and programs, which keep millions from being able to exercise their fundamental right to vote," said Kai Newkirk, mission director of Democracy Spring.

White House Postpones Executive Action On Voter Fraud Investigation

By Madeline Conway

Politico, January 26, 2017

The White House said that President Donald Trump would sign an executive action to begin an investigation into voter fraud on Friday or Saturday, postponing a move that had been expected on Thursday.

According to a pool report, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer told reporters late Thursday afternoon that Trump returned "a little late" from the Republican leadership retreat in Philadelphia and "got jammed up on some meetings that needed to occur," prompting the delay. Earlier in the day, Spicer had said that Trump planned to sign the action around 4:30 p.m.

The question of voter fraud has been in the news for most of the week. Trump took to Twitter on Wednesday to call for a "major" probe into voter fraud and irregularities in the voter rolls, two days after he repeated his false claim that he lost the popular vote because millions of people voted illegally for Hillary Clinton in November.

Isolated instances of voter fraud have been documented, though they are very rare, and widespread voter fraud is virtually nonexistent. Multiple independent fact-checkers have deemed Trump's unsubstantiated claim about fraud in the 2016 election false.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, too, said there is no evidence to support it. Sen. Lindsey Graham was more overtly critical, warning Tuesday that Trump's allegations, offered without evidence, undermine American democratic institutions.

Still, Ryan told MSNBC on Wednesday that he supports the president's call for an investigation into the issue. There probably is some fraud, he argued, reasoning that a probe would allow Trump to get the facts and make a judgment on the scale.

Spicer told reporters at the daily White House briefing on Wednesday that the investigation Trump had proposed would review more than just the 2016 election.

Trump addressed the issue early Thursday afternoon in remarks to the GOP's leadership retreat in Philadelphia, seeming to counter critics.

"We also need to keep the ballot box safe from illegal voting," he asserted. "And believe me, you take a look at what's registering, folks. They like to say, oh, Trump, Trump, Trump. Take a look at what's registering. We are going to protect the integrity of the ballot box, and we are going to defend the votes of the American citizen. So important."

If signed, the executive action is sure to prompt a rebuke from Democrats, who argued on Wednesday that such a probe is unnecessary and could be used to increase voter suppression going forward.

In recent years, generally Republican-led legislatures have cited fears of voter fraud to enact more regulations on voting, such as voter ID laws. Democrats and civil rights groups oppose those measures, arguing that they are discriminatory because they disproportionately affect minorities and young people who lack government-issued photo identification.

Trump Says He Will Work Against Illegal Voting

By Steve Holland

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump To Sign Executive Order Related To Voter Fraud

By Jenna Johnson And David Nakamura

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

President Trump plans to sign an executive order Thursday afternoon related to voter fraud, his press secretary told reporters without providing additional details.

A day earlier, Trump called for a "major investigation into VOTER FRAUD" in back-to-back tweets that said such a probe would cover "those registered to vote in two states, those who are illegal" and "those registered to vote who are dead (and many for a long time)." For weeks, Trump has claimed that he lost the popular vote in November's election because there were millions of illegal votes cast for Democratic rival Hillary Clinton. Trump insisted during a private reception with congressional leaders Monday that there were 3 million to 5 million ballots illegally cast, allowing Clinton to win the popular vote by more than 2.8 million votes, although she lost the electoral college vote to Trump.

The president and his aides have yet to provide any verifiable facts to back up his claim, and analyses of the election found virtually no confirmed cases of voter fraud, let alone millions of fraudulent votes. The National Association of Secretaries of State, which represents many of the country's state elections officials, said in a statement Tuesday that it is "not aware of any evidence that supports the voter fraud claims made by President Trump." Trump's campaign attorneys fought recount attempts in several states by Green Party candidate Jill Stein and stated in a recent court filing, "All available evidence suggests that the 2016 general election was not tainted by fraud or mistake."

Trump reiterated his call for an investigation during an interview with ABC News that aired Wednesday night. In defending himself, the president lashed out at the author of a 2012 Pew Center study that Trump and his team have pointed to as evidence of widespread fraud, even though the study showed no such thing. Trump said that despite what fellow Republicans and experts might say on the matter, "millions" of his supporters agree with him.

"We're going to launch an investigation to find out," Trump said. "And I will say this. Of those votes cast, none of them come to me. None of them come to me. They would all be for the other side. None of them come to me. But when you look at the people that are registered: dead, illegal, and two states. And some cases, maybe three states? We have a lot to look into."

Illegal Voting Claims, And Why They Don't Hold Up

By Nate Cohn

New York Times, January 26, 2017

There isn't any evidence to support President Trump's assertion that three to five million illegal votes were cast in the 2016 presidential election.

But there is one study that has been interpreted to suggest it is at least possible. It found that between 32,000 and 2.8 million noncitizen voters might have fraudulently cast ballots in the 2008 presidential election. The study, based on a survey of 38,000 people after that election, has been under fire since it was published in 2014.

Now even its authors concede that it probably overstated the amount of noncitizen voting. "The high-end estimates are likely incorrect," Jesse Richman, one of the co-authors of the study and a political science professor at Old Dominion University, said in an email exchange on Wednesday. In a post online, he also said that the findings do not support Mr. Trump's contention that millions cast ballots illegally.

Mr. Richman still maintains that some small percentage of noncitizens vote in American elections. But the debate over this study has moved on. It's no longer about whether millions of illegal votes were cast, but whether there's any evidence for noncitizen voting at all.

The study's bold claims fell apart because of something called response error: the possibility that people taking a survey don't answer a question correctly — in this case, a question about being American citizens.

There is always a tiny amount of response error in surveys. Respondents might not understand the question. Or they might understand it, but mark the wrong answer by mistake, if the survey is self-administered. An interviewer, if there is one, could accidentally record the wrong answer. Such errors usually aren't a problem large enough to change the results of a survey.

But both the survey and the question posed by researchers were unusual. The survey — the Cooperative Congressional Election Study — was huge, with 38,000 respondents in 2008. And the group in question — noncitizens — was very small, just 339 of those respondents.

The problem is that even a tiny amount of response error among the 38,000 respondents could have been enough to contaminate the results of the tiny group of noncitizens.

Imagine, for instance, that 99.9 percent of people respond to the survey's citizenship question correctly. In such a big survey, even that high success rate would still imply that there were 38 respondents who answered incorrectly — enough to make up a big chunk of the tiny pool of 339 noncitizen respondents. If those 38 misreported noncitizens had indeed voted, then suddenly it would look as if 10 percent of noncitizens voted.

This critique could explain all of the noncitizen voting observed in the study. Critics of the study — Stephen Ansolabehere, a Harvard political scientist, Samantha Luks, a statistician at YouGov, and Brian Schaffner, a political scientist at the University of Massachusetts Amherst — were able to marshal evidence strongly consistent with that possibility, because of the survey's unusual design: Thousands of voters are re-interviewed in subsequent elections.

That allowed the study's critics to check whether people were consistent about their answer on the citizenship answer from year to year. If the people were consistent, they were probably noncitizens. If voters were inconsistent, it would be a sign that the category was contaminated by the tiny number of voters who misreported their citizenship.

There was not much consistency. Between 2010 and 2012, 20 voters switched from being citizens to noncitizens (an extremely unlikely transition), and 36 others switched from noncitizens to citizens (a more common transition, but one reported at a far greater rate than typically occurs). These shifting answers strongly bolster the theory that many of the respondents logged as noncitizens had responded in error.

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But most important, among the 85 respondents who said they were noncitizens in both 2010 and 2012 — those most likely to really be noncitizens — none had voted in the 2010 midterm elections.

The critics concluded that "the likely percent of noncitizen voters in recent U.S. elections is 0."

In a response published in October, Mr. Richman and his colleagues did not contest the finding that measurement error probably exaggerated the number of noncitizen voters. "The response error issues they focus on may have biased our numbers," Mr. Richman said in an email to The New York Times on Wednesday. Mr. Richman and his colleagues have not estimated a new range of possible noncitizen voting.

Instead, the October response sought only to rebut the notion that there was no noncitizen voting. They argued that measurement error couldn't explain all of the people who said they were noncitizens and voted. When it came to hard evidence immune to the measurement error critique, Mr. Richman and his co-authors found one validated 2012 voter who had indicated not being a citizen in both the 2010 and 2012 surveys.

But the same noncitizen had indicated in the survey that he or she was not registered to vote. The determination that he or she was a voter was based on voter records: The respondents to the survey were matched to a voter registration file.

It is possible that this noncitizen was erroneously matched to the voter file. The matching process is good but imperfect, and becomes harder with less information — like the absence of a specific address or date of birth. That the respondent said he or she wasn't registered certainly raises the possibility that the match was wrong.

"I haven't seen any evidence that I would say shows that any noncitizens vote," Mr. Schaffner said. "That doesn't mean that the rate is exactly zero. But it does mean that it's so-low frequency that we can't even measure it with traditional methods."

Trump Advisers, Daughter Registered To Vote In 2 States

By Vivian Salama

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – President Donald Trump's sweeping preview of his plans to investigate voter fraud in the United States includes those registered in more than one state.

A number of people closest to the president fall into that category, including his Treasury Secretary nominee, Steve Mnuchin, Trump's son-in-law and close adviser, Jared Kushner, as well as his younger daughter, Tiffany Trump.

The president tweeted on Wednesday that he will be asking for a "major investigation" into voter fraud, "including those registered to vote in two states, those who are illegal and even, those registered to vote who are dead (and many for a long time)," he said.

"Depending on results, we will strengthen up voting procedures!"

It's not illegal to be registered in two states and just because someone is, it doesn't mean they vote in both. Trump's comments likely suggest a crackdown on those who actually vote in two or more states – claims that secretaries of state across the country have dismissed as baseless.

Mnuchin is registered in New York and California, according to a public voter database, and Kushner in New York and New Jersey. Tiffany Trump is registered in New York and Pennsylvania, where she went to college, according to the database – something presidential counselor Kellyanne Conway called "flatly false."

"She had been registered in Pennsylvania and went through the process, (and) said it was very byzantine and took a long time, but she said that she is not registered to vote in two states," Conway said Thursday on NBC's "Today."

The president's chief counsel, Steve Bannon, shifted his Florida registration last summer, from a former home in Miami-Dade County where his ex-wife once lived, to a beachfront home owned by a Breitbart colleague in Sarasota County on the Gulf Coast. On Wednesday, Sarasota Supervisor of Elections Ron Turner told reporters that Bannon never voted in the county and had been removed from the county's rolls this week based on information received from New York City's elections office.

A request for comment from the White House on how the proposed investigation might seek to address the two-state registration issue was not immediately answered.

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have finalized their election results with no reports of the kind of widespread fraud that Trump alleges.

Trump has long asserted that the system is "rigged," but he increasingly vocalized his concerns in August after courts rejected tough voter ID rules put in place for the first time in a presidential election in states including North Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin. The rulings cited a risk of disenfranchising the poor, minorities or young people who were less likely to have acceptable IDs – and who are more likely to vote Democratic.

Trump's tweet on the investigation alarmed Democrats who already believe that moves to tighten voter ID laws are a means to restrict access to the ballot box. Like the president, Trump's pick for attorney general, Republican Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, who could oversee any federal probe, has shown sympathy toward claims of voting fraud.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Rhonda Shafner in Washington; Donald Thompson in Sacramento, California; and Terry Spencer in West Palm Beach, Florida, contributed to this report.

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It Turns Out Jared Kushner And Sean Spicer Are Also Registered To Vote In Two States

By Matea Gold And Alice Crites

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

Jared Kushner, President Trump's son-in-law and one of his closest White House advisers, is registered to vote in both New Jersey and New York, while White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer is on the rolls both in Virginia and his home state of Rhode Island, according to elections officials and voting registration records.

Their dual registrations offer two more high-profile examples of how common it is for voters to be on the rolls in multiple states – something Trump has claimed is evidence of voter fraud.

With Kushner and Spicer, The Washington Post has now identified five Trump family members or top administration appointees who were registered in two states during the fall election. The others are chief White House strategist Stephen K. Bannon; Tiffany Trump, the president's youngest daughter; and Treasury Secretary nominee Steven Mnuchin, as first reported by CNN.

White House officials did not respond to requests for comment.

Trump said this week that the fact that many voters are registered in two states is a sign of widespread voter fraud, calling for a "major investigation" into his unsubstantiated claim that millions of people cast illegal ballots in November.

"You have people that are registered who are dead, who are illegals, who are in two states," the president told ABC's David Muir on Wednesday. "You have people registered in two states. They're registered in a New York and a New Jersey. They vote twice. There are millions of votes, in my opinion."

It is not illegal to be registered to vote in two states, and elections officials say that does not mean voters are casting ballots in two locations. In fact, it is quite common for out-of-date registrations to linger on the rolls, due to voters dying or moving to new jurisdictions. A 2012 Pew Center on the States study that Trump has erroneously cited as evidence of voter fraud found that about 2.75 million people were registered in more than one state — largely because voters did not report when they moved to new jurisdictions.

"It's not fraud," said John Lindback, executive director of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), a nonprofit organization that works with states to improve the accuracy of their voting rolls. "When people move from one state to another or move down the street, they don't think to change their voter registration."

That appears to be what happened in the case of Kushner, who married Trump's daughter Ivanka in October 2009. New Jersey voting records show that he registered to vote there in 1999 and cast ballots in New Jersey through the November 2009 state general election, when now-Gov. Chris Christie (R) was on the ballot for his first race.

Later that month, Kushner registered in New York at his Park Avenue address. Voting records show he began casting ballots in New York in 2010.

Representatives for Kushner did not respond to requests for comment.

Spicer last voted in Rhode Island in 1998, according to state records, which means his registration should have been declared inactive or removed by now. But the Rhode Island Board of Elections confirmed to the Post that he is still listed as having an active voter registration. Since September 1999, Spicer has also been registered to vote in Alexandria, Va., according to elections officials there.

In the case of Bannon, he was registered until this week in both New York and Florida, despite his efforts to remove himself from the rolls in the latter. Mnuchin is registered in both New York, where he last voted in 2008, and in California, where he cast his ballot in November, election records show. And Tiffany Trump, the president's daughter, is registered in New York and Pennsylvania, where she was attending college until May.

On Thursday, White House senior adviser Kellyanne Conway disputed that Tiffany Trump held dual registrations, telling NBC's "Today" that the president's youngest daughter told her "it is flatly false that she is registered in two states."

But elections officials said voters often do not realize they stay on the rolls after they have moved out of a jurisdiction.

One major reason that out-of-date registrations are not always flagged is that less than half the states participate in ERIC, a cooperative that was created after the 2012 Pew study to help make voter rolls more accurate and comprehensive. Members of the group, which currently includes 20 states and the District of Columbia, are required to share their voter registration data every 60 days. The nonprofit group uses that data — along with information from state motor vehicle departments, the Social Security death index and the U.S. Postal Service's national change of address list — to match and update voter files. In 2016, it identified about 2 million voters who had moved, passed away or had duplicate registrations.

"Before ERIC was formed, it was much worse," Lindback said. But he noted that some of the most populous states, including California, Florida and New York, do not

participate. If more states join,"the number of cases will go way down," he added.

Lindback, who previously served as Oregon's director of elections, said he is hopeful that Trump's focus on dual registrations could help encourage more states to exchange data. But he said he's concerned that the president's debunked claims that millions of illegal votes were cast in November could "have the effect of reducing confidence in how our elections are run."

"I just don't get it," he added. "I have been in elections a lot of years, and it's usually the loser of an election who claims fraud. I've never seen a winner claim fraud. What is going on here?"

This post has been updated.

Why Did Trump Lose The Popular Vote? Because He Didn't Care About It. And Because They Cheated.

By Philip Bump

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

When it comes to explaining why he lost the popular vote, President Trump has a simple explanation. He lost the popular vote because he wasn't interested in winning the popular vote, focusing instead on the electoral college — and if he'd focused on the popular vote, he would have won that even more easily, and also he lost the popular vote because his opponents cheated in some of the deepest-blue states in the country.

Done and done.

In his first major interview since moving into the White House, Trump took ABC's David Muir on a tour of the gilded, expansive recesses of both his new residence and his mind. Thanks to Trump's tweets on the subject, Muir quickly turned the questioning to the subject of voter fraud, which Trump insists was a huge factor in November's election and which reality suggests was not.

Trump used the subject to reiterate a defense of his popularity.

"I would've won the popular vote if I was campaigning for the popular vote," he said. "I would've gone to California where I didn't go at all. I would've gone to New York where I didn't campaign at all. I would've gone to a couple of places that I didn't go to."

"And I would've won that much easier than winning the electoral college," he added. "But as you know, the electoral college is all that matters. It doesn't make any difference. So, I would've won very, very easily. But it's a different form of winning. You would campaign much differently. You would have a totally different campaign."

It's true that the need to win the electoral college meant that Trump's focus during the campaign was different from what it would have been had the contest come down to vote totals. But that's not the same thing as saying that Trump would have won the popular vote, much less "much easier" than he won the electoral college. (To be fair, if he had won the popular vote by any margin, it would likely have been an easier victory than his skin-of-his-teeth electoral college win, which came down to about 78,000 votes in three states.)

Trump would have needed to do 10 percentage points better in California to close the 2.9-million vote deficit he faced nationally. His argument that he could have made progress to that end if he'd campaigned in the state has only one critical drawback: Hillary Clinton would have campaigned there, too. (Had Clinton campaigned more in the Midwest, many people have pointed out, Muir would have been sitting down with her.)

Trump says he didn't go to either California or New York at all, which isn't entirely true. Trump made four stops in New York after that state's primary, according to the National Journal's candidate travel tracker, excluding a debate and the announcement of his vice presidential pick. (He visited California only before that state's primary.) Clinton had campaign events there even less frequently, though she did run ads in California over the last few weeks of the campaign. Trump's team did campaign in both states, though not at any real scale.

That said, it's not surprising that Trump did poorly in the two states (despite his assurances on the campaign trail that they would be in play). California and New York have given the Democrat at least 1 million more votes than the Republican in every election since 1992. In California, that figure has been creeping upward, with Barack Obama winning by a 3 million vote margin in 2008 and 2012, and Clinton by 4.3 million this year. In New York, the Democrat has won by at least 1.5 million votes in five of the past seven contests. Trump might have eaten into those margins had he campaigned harder — but Clinton might also have widened her lead in those friendly territories.

Which brings us to part two of Trump's excuse-making to Muir.

"With that being said," he said, "if you look at voter registration, you look at the dead people that are registered to vote who vote, you look at people that are registered in two states, you look at all of these different things that are happening with registration. … They don't wanna talk about registration. You have people that are registered who are dead, who are illegals, who are in two states. You have people registered in two states. They're registered in a New York and a New Jersey. They vote twice. There are millions of votes, in my opinion."

The wonderful part of this exchange is the directness with which Trump tries to have his cake and eat it, too. He defends his claims that millions of people voted illegally by noting that there are problems with the voter registration system at that scale. That's a fair defense, with some

CBP FOIA000565

caveats. But then he immediately re-conflates registration with voting ("there are millions of votes"). That's a neat trick: You criticize me for saying there are millions of illegal votes when I'm just noting that there are millions of questionable registrations. Just registrations! (And also votes.)

The now-infamous report from Pew Trusts in 2012 does point out that there were millions of outdated registrations at that point because our voting systems do a bad job of weeding out people who have died or moved. (Like Trump's daughter.) Pew's point was that the systems should be improved, not that fraud results from these problems; in fact, Pew's researchers explicitly pointed out then and now that there was no rampant fraud. (This, Trump told Muir, was because the researchers wanted a positive response from the anti-Trump media — even way back in 2012, apparently.)

At a news conference on Thursday, Trump's press secretary Sean Spicer pointed to California and New York as potential epicenters of this nonexistent fraud. "I think there's a lot of states that we didn't compete in where that's not necessarily the case," Spicer said about the campaign's admitting in a legal filing that there was no rampant fraud in the election. "You look at California and New York, I'm not sure that those statements were — we didn't look at those two states, in particular."

Our colleague Dave Weigel noted the sheer ridiculousness of this idea from a political standpoint: If you're going to orchestrate a massive, illegal effort to cast millions of ballots for Hillary Clinton, why on Earth would you do it in two states you knew she was going to win easily anyway? Whether or not the Clinton team thought they'd win Michigan and Pennsylvania, why not stack the deck in those places regardless, since they were always going to be more competitive than the deepest-blue parts of the country?

For a lot of Trump supporters, this overlaps with perceptions of California as a haven of undocumented immigrants, people encouraged by some all-powerful Democratic machine to commit a federal crime by illegally giving their names and contact information to the state government. We looked at the number of newly registered voters who were born outside the country; only 148,000 people fit that description from Latin American countries. There's no indication at all that any significant number of them were voting illegally.

This has been another 1,000 words or so on Trump's ongoing insecurity about having lost the popular vote. His arguments for why the popular vote results don't suggest that he's unpopular haven't gotten any more effective, but they have gotten more numerous. It will be simpler moving forward, I suppose, to simply note that Trump continues to claim that he could have and did win the popular vote even though he didn't and probably wouldn't have. And to note that what Trump says on this subject, if not others, should not necessarily be taken at face value.

Trump Pressured Park Service To Back Up His Claims About Inauguration Crowd

By Karen Tumulty And Juliet Eilperin

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

On the morning after Donald Trump's inauguration, acting National Park Service director Michael T. Reynolds received an extraordinary summons: The new president wanted to talk to him.

In a Saturday phone call, Trump personally ordered Reynolds to produce additional photographs of the previous day's crowds on the National Mall, according to three individuals who have knowledge of the conversation. The president believed that they might prove that the media had lied in reporting that attendance had been no better than average.

Trump also expressed anger over a retweet sent from the agency's account, in which side-by-side photographs showed far fewer people at his swearing-in than had shown up to see Barack Obama's inaugural in 2009.

According to one account, Reynolds had been contacted by the White House and given a phone number to call. When he dialed it, he was told to hold for the president.

For Trump, who sees himself and his achievements in superlative terms, the inauguration's crowd size has been a source of grievance that he appears unable to put behind him. It is a measure of his fixation on the issue that he would devote part of his first morning in office to it — and that he would take out his frustrations on an acting Park Service director.

Word rapidly spread through the agency and Washington. The individuals who informed The Washington Post about the call declined to be identified because of the sensitive nature of the conversation.

Neither Reynolds nor the Park Service would talk about it.

"The National Park Service does not comment on internal conversations among administration officials," agency spokesman Thomas Crosson said.

White House deputy press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the call simply demonstrated that Trump's management style is to be "so accessible, and constantly in touch."

"He's not somebody who sits around and waits. He takes action and gets things done," Sanders said. "That's one of the reasons that he is president today, and Hillary Clinton isn't."

On Saturday, the same day Trump spoke with Reynolds, the new president used an appearance at CIA headquarters to deliver a blistering attack on the media for reporting that large swaths of the Mall were nearly empty during the event.

"It's a lie," Trump said. "We caught [the media]. We caught them in a beauty."

"It looked like a million, a million and a half people," Trump said, vastly inflating what the available evidence suggested.

Later that day, White House press secretary Sean Spicer reiterated Trump's complaints about media coverage of the crowd in a tongue-lashing from the lectern of the briefing room.

"These attempts to lessen the enthusiasm of the inauguration are shameful and wrong," Spicer said.

The Park Service does not release crowd estimates. Experts, however, have estimated that the 2017 turnout was no more than a third the size of Obama's eight years earlier.

Reynolds was taken aback by Trump's request, but did secure some additional aerial photographs and forwarded them to the White House through normal channels in the Interior Department, the sources said. The photos, however, did not prove Trump's contention that the crowd size was upwards of 1 million.

Reynolds, who had served as the Park Service's deputy director of operations for six months before assuming the post of acting director, is a third-generation employee who has worked there for more than 30 years. As deputy director, he oversaw the Service's $2.8 billion budget and more than 22,000 employees.

In the days since Trump's election, the Park Service has become an unlikely protagonist in a battle between the new president and some career government employees.

The trouble began late Friday, when the agency's official Twitter account retweeted two tweets that could be perceived as critical of the new administration: the one comparing the relative crowd size for Trump's inaugural to that of Obama's 2009 swearing-in, and another that noted policy pages that had been removed from the White House's website.

That prompted an "urgent directive" to Interior employees that they "shut down Twitter platforms immediately until further notice," which was lifted early Saturday morning. Crosson then apologized on Twitter for "mistaken RTs from our account."

On Tuesday, the Badlands National Park's Twitter account became a social media sensation when it posted four tweets in a row about rising atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations and the threats posed by climate change.

Those tweets were then deleted. An NPS official later explained that Badlands NPS officials learned they were posted by a former employee who still had access to the account, and decided to remove them.

Spicer told reporters this week that White House officials had not dictated any agency to impose new restrictions on public communications and that some federal officials, such as those at the Park Service, were not in compliance with their own department's policies.

Trump, meanwhile, has continued to press the argument that the media has given a misleading account of the crowds that attended his inauguration.

"I had a massive amount of people here," the president told ABC News anchor David Muir in an interview Wednesday. "They were showing pictures that were very unflattering, as unflattering — from certain angles — that were taken early and lots of other things."

As he guided Muir through the West Wing, Trump paused at a photo on the wall, taken from behind him as he delivered his inaugural address: "Here's a picture of the event. Here's a picture of the crowd. Now, the audience was the biggest ever, but this crowd was massive. Look how far back it goes. This crowd was massive."

Brady Dennis and Lisa Rein contributed to this report.

Trump Backs Senate Rules Change For Vote On High Court Pick

By David Jackson And Richard Wolf

USA Today, January 26, 2017

President Trump said Thursday that Republicans should change Senate rules to ensure his nominee to the Supreme Court gets confirmed.

Saying he has pretty much decided who that nominee will be, Trump told Fox News host Sean Hannity he would back the so-called "nuclear option," which would deny Democrats the chance to block a final vote by preventing a 60-vote majority.

"We have obstructionists," Trump said, complaining that Senate Democrats already have delayed votes on at least two of his Cabinet selections, Attorney General-designate Jeff Sessions and CIA Director Mike Pompeo.

When Democrats controlled the Senate, they instituted the same rules change for federal appellate and trial courts after complaining that Republicans were blocking too many of President Barack Obama's nominees.

Without the rules change, Trump's Supreme Court nominee would need eight votes from the Democratic side to break a filibuster. That would be particularly difficult for federal appeals court Judge William Pryor of Alabama, who was blocked initially by Democrats after President George W. Bush nominated him to the 11th Circuit.

A day after saying he would announce his Supreme Court pick next Thursday, Trump told Hannity he has all but made his selection.

Aides and attorneys familiar with the process have tabbed two federal appeals court judges as favorites, Neil Gorsuch of Colorado and Thomas Hardiman of Pennsylvania, with Pryor remaining a possibility.

"I have made my decision pretty much in my mind, yes," Trump said. "That's subject to change at the last moment, but I think this will be a great choice."

Trump Backs Nuclear Option If Dems Block SCOTUS Nominee

By Burgess Everett

Politico, January 26, 2017

If Senate Democrats block his Supreme Court Pick, President Donald Trump would encourage Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to go nuclear and further erode the Senate filibuster.

In an interview taped with Fox News's Sean Hannity on Thursday morning, Trump said that he "would" encourage McConnell to kill the 60-vote threshold on nominees to the high court.

"I would. We have obstructionists," Trump said, dinging Democrats for delaying the confirmations of Sen. Jeff Sessions as attorney general and Mike Pompeo as CIA director. "Why are they doing that?"

McConnell and his deputies have signaled they will do whatever it takes to confirm a Supreme Court nominee after blocking former President Barack Obama from filling the seat for nearly a year. But they have not explicitly said such an earth-shattering rules change is on the table.

In 2013, Senate Democrats killed the supermajority requirement on all nominees but the Supreme Court. And now Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) is threatening to block a court pick that is not "mainstream." The Senate GOP would need at least eight Democrats to confirm a Supreme Court pick under Senate rules, but Republicans could use the unilateral "nuclear option" to changes the rules to a simple majority.

It's not clear if Republicans could muster enough votes to make a unilateral rules change. Historically McConnell and people like Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Susan Collins have been opposed to changing the fabric of the Senate. Republicans would need at least 50 of their 52 members to support such a change.

Trump is expected to announce his court pick next week. He told Hannity that he has "made my decision pretty much in my mind."

"That's subject to change at the last moment," he said. "But I think this will be a great choice."

The full interview will air Thursday night.

Trump To Nominate 'Strict Constructionist' To Supreme Court: Pence

By Jeff Mason

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump: Chelsea Manning's An 'Ungrateful Traitor'

By Daniel Halper

New York Post, January 26, 2017

President Trump blasted Chelsea Manning as an ingrate on Thursday for having the gall to criticize the former Commander in Chief, who commuted her lengthy prison sentence.

"Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader," Trump said in a Thursday morning tweet. "Terrible!"

Manning was found guilty of leaking state secrets to WikiLeaks and ordered to serve 35 years.

In one of his last acts as president, Obama commuted Manning's sentence, bringing it down from 35 years to 7. She'll be released in May.

She weighed in on Obama in a Wednesday op-ed in The Guardian, saying the "one simple lesson" to draw from his legacy: "do not start off with a compromise."

"They won't meet you in the middle. Instead, what we need is an unapologetic progressive leader," she added.

Manning, who claims Obama "faced unparalleled resistance from his opponents, many of whom wanted him to fail," says he failed to meet the moment of his presidency. She argues the president was too timid on domestic and foreign policy alike — and that liberals need someone more bold to lead them in the future.

"We need someone who is unafraid to be criticized, since you will inevitably be criticized. We need someone willing to face all of the vitriol, hatred and dogged determination of those opposed to us," she said.

"We need to actually take the reins of government and fix our institutions. We need to save lives by making change at every level," she concludes.

No where in the op-ed does Manning actually thank Obama for commuting her sentence.

Chelsea Manning Criticizes Obama, Draws Trump's Ire

By Susan Heavey

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump Criticizes Chelsea Manning For Criticizing Obama

By David M Jackson

USA Today, January 26, 2017

President Trump hit Twitter early Thursday morning to attack soon-to-be-released hacker Chelsea Manning for criticizing President Obama.

"Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader. Terrible!" Trump said.

(Of course, the post also allowed Trump to echo the attack on his predecessor.)

Trump spent most of Obama's two terms as president criticizing him, including a multiyear campaign aimed at questioning Obama's birth in the United States.

The president reacted to a column that Manning — the U.S. Army private who provided classified information to WikiLeaks — wrote for the Guardian newspaper, criticizing the president who commuted his 35-year prison sentence.

"Barack Obama left behind hints of a progressive legacy," Manning wrote. "Unfortunately, despite his faith in our system and his positive track record on many issues over the last eight years, there have been very few permanent accomplishments."

The column comes a week after Obama's commutation order that allows Manning to leave prison in May.

Chelsea Manning Is A Traitor And Shouldn't Have Been Released, Trump Tweets

The president did not take kindly to Manning's criticism of President Obama.

By Curt Mills, Staff Writer

U.S. News & World Report, January 26, 2017

U.S. Army Pfc. Chelsea Manning poses for a photo in an undated photo. (U.S. Army, File/AP)

President Donald Trump attacked Chelsea Manning as an "ungrateful traitor" Thursday, saying she "should never have been released."

Manning, 29, had her sentenced commuted by Barack Obama in the last days of his presidency earlier this month. She was convicted in military court of leaking a "treasure trove" of state secrets to WikiLeaks.

"Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader. Terrible!" the president tweeted.

In 2010, as a private citizen, Trump suggested the death penalty for Manning. Members of Trump's National Security Council have also previously expressed support for such a measure.

Trump's tweet appears to be in reaction to recent criticism by Manning, who will be released in May, of President Obama.

Manning penned a column in the Guardian on the former president's administration, published Thursday, hitting Obama on everything from foreign policy to healthcare to his reaction to the Orlando Pulse nightclub massacre.

"In the aftermath of the deadly shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando that took the lives of nearly 50 queer and brown people, it took Obama over 300 words of his speech to acknowledge the queer community, and even then, as an abstract acronym," Manning wrote.

"Obama left behind hints of a progressive legacy. Unfortunately, despite his faith in our system and his positive track record on many issues over the last eight years, there have been very few permanent accomplishments," Manning added.

Manning hit Obama's political antagonists, as well.

"Nothing was ever good enough for his opponents," Manning writes. She had nothing positive to say about Trump, remarking, "after eight years… we are moving into darker times."

Tags: Chelsea Manning, Donald Trump, WikiLeaks, prison sentences, prisons, military, Barack Obama, transgender

Compromise Doesn't Work With Our Political Opponents. When Will We Learn?

By Chelsea E Manning

The Guardian (UK), January 25, 2017

Barack Obama left behind hints of a progressive legacy. Unfortunately, despite his faith in our system and his positive track record on many issues over the last eight years, there have been very few permanent accomplishments.

This vulnerable legacy should remind us that what we really need is a strong and unapologetic progressive to lead us. What we need as well is a relentless grassroots movement to hold that leadership accountable.

On the night of 4 November 2008, Barack Obama was elected on a platform of "hope" and "change". He was hailed as a "uniter" in an age of "dividers". I experienced a political awakening that night. I watched as the hope that President Obama represented was tempered by the shocking passage of Proposition 8 by a majority of voters in California. This reversed a major marriage equality court victory from earlier that year.

Throughout his two terms in office, these types of contradictions would persist. Optimism and hope would be met with backlash and hate. He faced unparalleled resistance from his opponents, many of whom wanted him to fail.

I remember during his first inauguration, on an icy January morning in 2009. I sat on the floor of a military headquarters office in Fort Drum, New York. With a dusty overhead television showing the ceremony, I sat, working in support of a half dozen military officers. We had our weapons

ready, and our rucksacks heavily packed. Selected as the active duty army unit to deploy to Washington DC in case of an emergency, we were prepared for rapid deployment.

Ironically, many of the officers and enlisted personnel that were selected for this security detail openly despised President Obama. The seething vitriol and hatred simmered quietly in that room. In retrospect, it was an ominous foreshadowing of things to come.

On domestic issues, his instinct, as former First Lady Michelle Obama explained at the Democratic national convention this past summer, was to "go high" when his opponents would "go low". Unfortunately, no matter how "high" the former president aimed to be, his opponents aimed to undermine him anyway. There was absolutely no "low" that was too low to go.

Even when they agreed with him on policy, they resisted. For example, when it came to healthcare reform, Obama opened the debate starting with a compromise. His opponents balked. They refused to move an inch. When he would push for the concessions they asked for, they only dug in deeper in opposition. Even when he tried proposing a bill that had been proposed by opponents years earlier.

When it came to foreign policy, even though he was only carrying out the expanding national security policies of the previous administration, they would ceaselessly criticize him for being too weak, or too soft or too sympathetic. After months of comprise on his end, they never cooperated a single time.

In December 2009, I sat in a hot and stuffy plywood room outside Baghdad, Iraq, as President Obama made speeches. He argued that military action was necessary. An unusual statement to present while receiving the world's most prestigious peace prize. Yet, the people around me still spoke about him quietly, with a strong criticism, and even sometimes, pure disgust.

In November 2012, when President Obama was re-elected, I sat in a civilian jail cell in suburban Baltimore, awaiting a court martial hearing. Surrounded by a different crowd of people, the excitement and elation of his re-election was genuine. Even among those being penalized merely for being disadvantaged or a minority. Even in those unbearably unfair circumstances, there was genuine hope, faith and trust in the president.

For eight years, it did not matter how balanced President Obama was. It did not matter how educated he was, or how intelligent he was. Nothing was ever good enough for his opponents. It was clear that he could not win. It was clear that, no matter what he did, in their eyes, he could not win.

In the aftermath of the deadly shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando that took the lives of nearly 50 queer and brown people, it took Obama over 300 words of his speech to acknowledge the queer community, and even then, as an abstract acronym.

Never did he acknowledge the particularly painful toll on the Puerto Rican and wider community that was also navigating through this horrific tragedy. Even in the midst of a shocking and horrific tragedy, he attempted to comprise with opponents who were uninterested and unwilling to meet him halfway.

Now, after eight years of attempted compromise and relentless disrespect in return, we are moving into darker times. Healthcare will change for the worse, especially for those of us in need. Criminalization will expand, with bigger prisons filled with penalized bodies – poor, black, brown, queer and trans people. People will probably be targeted because of their religion. Queer and trans people expect to have their rights infringed upon.

The one simple lesson to draw from President Obama's legacy: do not start off with a compromise. They won't meet you in the middle. Instead, what we need is an unapologetic progressive leader.

We need someone who is unafraid to be criticized, since you will inevitably be criticized. We need someone willing to face all of the vitriol, hatred and dogged determination of those opposed to us. Our opponents will not support us nor will they stop thwarting the march toward a just system that gives people a fighting chance to live. Our lives are at risk – especially for immigrants, Muslim people and black people.

We need to stop asking them to give us our rights. We need to stop hoping that our systems will right themselves. We need to actually take the reins of government and fix our institutions. We need to save lives by making change at every level.

Trump Blasts Chelsea Manning For Calling Obama A 'weak' Leader, Even Though He's Done The Same

By Dylan Stableford

Yahoo! News, January 26, 2017

President Donald Trump criticized Chelsea Manning on Thursday for referring to former President Barack Obama as a "weak leader."

"Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader," Trump tweeted. "Terrible!"

Donald J. Trump ✔@realDonaldTrump

Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader. Terrible!

5:04 AM – 26 Jan 2017

25,223 25,223 Retweets 108,724 108,724 likes

Before leaving office earlier this month, Obama commuted the former Army intelligence analyst's 35-year prison sentence for leaking U.S. military logs and diplomatic cables to WikiLeaks in 2010. Contrary to Trump's tweet, Manning has yet to be released; she is due to be freed on May 17.

The incoming Trump administration said Obama's decision "sends a very troubling message when it comes to the handling of classified information and [the] consequences to those who leak information that threatens the safety of our nation."

Obama defended the move, saying that Manning had taken "responsibility" for her crime — and the sentence she had received was "very disproportionate" to those given to other leakers.

"Let's be clear, Chelsea Manning has served a tough prison sentence," Obama said at his final press conference as president. "So the notion that the average person who was thinking about disclosing vital classified information would think that it goes unpunished, I don't think [they] would get that impression from the sentence that Chelsea Manning has served."

In a column published Thursday by the Guardian newspaper, Manning argued that Obama was not "bold enough" — and that some of her fellow officers openly criticized him for being "too weak, or too soft or too sympathetic."

While Trump blasted Manning for describing Obama as "weak," Trump did the same thing during his presidential campaign.

Last June, following the massacre at Orlando's Pulse nightclub, Trump ripped what he called Obama's "weak attitude" toward terror.

"If you think Orlando was the end of it with this weak attitude and pathetic president we have, it wasn't, folks," Trump said at a rally in Las Vegas.

In an interview with Fox News host Bill O'Reilly last August, Trump said Obama had been "weak" and "ineffective" as commander in chief.

"I know far more about foreign policy than he knows," Trump said. "I think he's one of the worst presidents, maybe the worst that we've ever had in the history of our country."

Then, after declaring Obama the "founder of ISIS," Trump blasted Obama as "so weak and so bad" at a rally in Pennsylvania.

Even before Trump launched his campaign, he often used "weak" to tweak Obama on Twitter.

Donald J. Trump ✔@realDonaldTrump

The only global warming that people should be concerned with is the global warming caused by nuclear weapons because of our weak U.S. leader

7:22 PM – 14 Jul 2014

490 490 Retweets 481 481 likes

Donald J. Trump ✔@realDonaldTrump

Isn't it sad the way Putin is toying with Obama regarding Snowden. We look weak and pathetic. Could not happen with.a strong leader!

10:49 PM – 1 Aug 2013

476 476 Retweets 385 385 likes

Meanwhile, like many of Trump's other tweets, his missive about Manning appears to have been inspired by a cable news report he may have been watching.

View image on Twitter

View image on Twitter

Brian Stelter ✔@brianstelter

14 minutes apart: Fox says "ungrateful traitor," Trump says "ungrateful traitor," Fox says "weak leader," Trump says "weak leader."

6:29 AM – 26 Jan 2017

11,288 11,288 Retweets 14,155 14,155 likes

View image on Twitter

View image on Twitter

Follow

Michael Calderone ✔@mlcalderone

Trump calls Manning an "ungrateful traitor" right after Fox News aired this: http://wapo.st/2k73pPS

7:02 AM – 26 Jan 2017

306 306 Retweets 373 373 likes

President Trump Calls Chelsea Manning An 'Ungrateful Traitor' For Criticizing Obama : NPR

By Danielle Kurtzleben

NPR, January 26, 2017

Donald Trump took aim at Chelsea Manning in an early morning tweet on Thursday.

The tweet appears to refer to an op-ed published in The Guardian on Thursday morning, in which former Army Pvt. Chelsea Manning criticizes former President Obama as having been too willing to attempt compromise with his political opponents and being insufficiently progressive. She did not, however, call Obama a "weak leader" in so many words, as Trump's tweet might suggest.

Manning leaked hundreds of thousands of documents to WikiLeaks in 2010 and was subsequently sentenced to a 35-year prison term. After seven years in prison for Manning, President Obama commuted that sentence last week, just before leaving office.

Manning acknowledged that Obama's opponents were unusually obstinate, writing that the former president "faced unparalleled resistance from his opponents, many of whom wanted him to fail." However, Manning excoriated Obama for, in her eyes, compromising too much on health care and foreign policy, and she called for "a strong and unapologetic progressive" to lead the United States.

It wasn't clear whether Trump's tweet was intended to come to Obama's defense — Trump, after all, has slammed the former president on many occasions. Rather, it may have been an opportunity to both criticize Manning and draw attention to criticism of Obama — criticism coming from someone whom Obama recently prevented from serving around 28 more years in prison, no less.

Likewise, it's not clear whether Trump's tweets were inspired directly by the Guardian column. The tweets came minutes after a Fox News report that could easily have prompted them, as CNN's Brian Stelter tweeted.

Reporting on the column, Fox and Friends First's Abby Huntsman said that "the disgraced former Army private is slamming President Obama as a weak leader with few permanent accomplishments," while the words "ungrateful traitor" appeared at the bottom of the screen, as Mediaite pointed out.

This wouldn't be the first time that Trump's tweets correlate with Fox News segments. As BuzzFeed's Brandon Wall pointed out earlier this week, a recent tweet about violence in Chicago may also have been inspired by a segment on the O'Reilly Factor.

Trump Calls Chelsea Manning A 'Traitor' Who Does Not Deserve Freedom

By Brian Murphy

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

President Trump on Thursday intensified his criticism of the decision to commute the sentence of military leaker Chelsea Manning, calling her a "traitor" who should remain in prison.

In a tweet, Trump claimed Manning had called former president Barack Obama a "weak leader" even after her 35-year sentence was commuted in the last days of the Obama administration.

Trump appeared to be referring to a column that Manning wrote in the Guardian newspaper. In the commentary, she argued that Obama's legacy will leave "few permanent accomplishments" because he often sought common ground and compromise rather than battling harder against "unparalleled resistance from his opponents."

Manning wrote: "What we need is an unapologetic progressive leader."

The use of the word "traitor" is often tossed around by political leaders and others to describe alleged acts that threaten national security. But it is rare for a president to brand someone as a traitor, and Trump's comment raised questions about whether he could try to bring further action against Manning, who is scheduled to be released in May.

"Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader. Terrible!" Trump wrote.

Last week, days before being named White House spokesman, Sean Spicer said Trump was "troubled" by Obama's commutation of the sentence of Manning, an Army private convicted of taking troves of secret diplomatic and military documents and disclosing them to WikiLeaks.

"It's disappointing, and it sends a very troubling message when it comes to the handling of classified information and to the consequences of those who leak information that threatens the security of our nation," Spicer told reporters.

Spicer called Manning "someone who has given away this country's secrets," but he did not directly answer a question about whether Trump would take any steps to reverse or delay Obama's decision.

Obama said that the seven years Manning has served behind bars amounted to enough punishment and that she had been given an excessive sentence.

Manning, then known as Bradley Manning, was arrested in Iraq in May 2010 after trasmitting documents to WikiLeaks that came to be known as the Iraq and Afghanistan "War Logs." Manning also shared a video that showed a U.S. Apache helicopter in Baghdad opening fire on a group of people that the crew believed to be insurgents. Among the dead were two journalists who worked for the Reuters news agency. Manning also leaked documents pertaining to Guantanamo Bay prisoners, as well as 250,000 State Department cables.

Manning came out as transgender after her conviction.

WikiLeaks Defends Chelsea Manning From President's Twitter Attack: 'Trump Is Wrong'

By Andrew Blake

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

WikiLeaks came to the defense of the website's most well-known source Thursday after President Trump lashed out at convicted Army leaker Pvt. Chelsea Manning for reflecting on the Obama administration's shortcomings in a new op-ed published as she prepares to leave prison.

Manning, 29, became the target of one of Mr. Trump's Twitter tirades early Thursday after The Guardian newspaper published an editorial written by the soon-to-be-released WikiLeaks collaborator critical of former President Barack Obama's eight years in office.

"The one simple lesson to draw from President Obama's legacy: do not start off with a compromise. They won't meet you in the middle. Instead, what we need is an unapologetic progressive leader," Manning wrote, adding that Mr. Obama's successor must be a person "who is unafraid to be criticized" in spite of having their every move evaluated without end.

SEE ALSO: Donald Trump: 'Ungrateful traitor' Chelsea Manning 'should never have been released'

"Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader. Terrible!" Mr. Trump tweeted in response to the column.

"Trump is wrong," WikiLeaks fired back from its own Twitter account afterward. "Manning was found innocent of 'aiding the enemy' & Pentagon admitted under oath no-one harmed."

Indeed, Manning was convicted in 2013 of charges including espionage and theft in connection with providing WikiLeaks with a trove of state secrets obtained during her deployment as an intelligence analyst in the Iraq War. She was acquitted of "aiding the enemy," however, after military prosecutors failed to show during her court-martial that America's adversaries benefited from the soldier's disclosures.

And while Manning did use the word "weak" once in her assessment of the Obama administration, it wasn't exactly a personal critique. Instead, rather, she wrote that Mr. Obama's opponents "would ceaselessly criticize him for being too weak, or too soft or too sympathetic" on matters of foreign policy and national security.

As noted by WikiLeaks, in fact, Mr. Trump has used identical language himself in the past with respect to describing his predecessor and countless other critics.

"Trump denounces Manning for agreeing with him," WikiLeaks said in a separate tweet Thursday accompanied by a screenshot of the president accusing Mr. Obama last year of demonstrating "weak leadership."

A review of Mr. Trump's Twitter activity reveals the president has previously used the word "weak" not only to repeatedly describe Mr. Obama, but also former Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, Republican House Leader Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, Republican Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona, Independent Sen. Bernard Sanders of Vermont, Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, CNN host Rick Wilson, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, the department store chain Macy's, the ending of the 2015 movie "Unbroken" and entrepreneur Mark Cuban, in addition to many of his former 2016 GOP rivals for the presidency.

Mr. Obama announced days before leaving office this month that he has agreed to commute the remainder of Manning's 35-year prison sentence, paving the way for the soldier to be released this May after roughly seven years in military prison.

Prior to her arrest in 2010, Manning admittedly provided WikiLeaks with a trove of documents including diplomatic cables and war logs taken from State Department and military computer systems, respectively.

Mr. Trump's reaction to Manning's op-ed on Thursday signaled the first time he's publicly discussed the Army leaker since taking office notwithstanding the president's frequent praising of WikiLeaks, which infamously published hacked emails obtained from Mrs. Clinton's presidential campaign and the Democratic National Committee in the run-up to last year's White House race.

"I love WikiLeaks!" Mr. Trump pronounced at a pre-election event in Pennsylvania last year.

In light of Mr. Trump refusing to release his tax records upon taking office, however, his personal opinion regarding WikiLeaks may very well change soon given the website's latest efforts: On Sunday, WikiLeaks issued a request for anyone with access to the president's financial documents to securely upload them to its website.

"Trump's breach of promise over the release of his tax returns is even more gratuitous than Clinton concealing her Goldman Sachs transcripts," WikiLeaks tweeted.

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Trump Calls Chelsea Manning's Critique Of Obama 'Terrible'

By Margaret Talev

Bloomberg Politics, January 26, 2017

President Donald Trump said it is "terrible" that Chelsea Manning, the Army intelligence analyst convicted of leaking classified material, is now criticizing the leadership of the man who commuted her sentence: former President Barack Obama.

"Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader," Trump said Thursday in a message on Twitter. "Terrible!"

Manning, in an opinion piece posted Wednesday in the Guardian, said Obama's "vulnerable" legacy is a reminder that "what we need is a strong and unapologetic progressive to lead us." Manning said that now the U.S. is "moving into darker times."

Obama announced days before leaving office that he shortened Manning's sentence and she will be released in May. She was convicted in 2013 and sentenced to 35 years in prison after being arrested in 2010 for leaking 700,000 military files and diplomatic cables to WikiLeaks.

Manning "took responsibility for her crime" and the punishment was "very disproportionate" compared "to what other leakers had received," Obama said, adding that "I feel very comfortable that justice has been served and a message has still been sent."

Trump disagreed with Obama's action.

Trump Calls Chelsea Manning An 'Ungrateful Traitor' After Obama Remarks

By Nicole Hernandez

Boston Globe, January 26, 2017

President Donald Trump took aim at Chelsea Manning Thursday morning after she attacked former president Barack Obama in a column published in the Guardian the day before.

Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader. Terrible!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) January 26, 2017

Manning did not call Obama a "weak leader" as President Trump claimed in the tweet but did write that liberals should learn from his mistakes of compromising with his political foes.

Shortly before leaving the White House, Obama had commuted the 35-year sentence for the Army intelligence officer who leaked more than 700,000 classified documents to WikiLeaks. Manning will now be released from the military prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., in May.

In her first column since the commutation, Manning wrote that Obama leaves behind a "vulnerable legacy."

"The one simple lesson to draw from President Obama's legacy: do not start off with a compromise. They won't meet you in the middle. Instead, what we need is an unapologetic progressive leader," she wrote.

Manning was known as Bradley Manning when she leaked the archives and came out as transgender after she was sentenced in 2013. LGBT rights groups took up her cause and lobbied then-president Obama to grant her clemency.

President Trump cannot undo the commutation.

Material from the Associated Press was used in this report. Nicole Hernandez can be reached at nicole.hernandez@globe.com. Follow her on Twitter @NRHSJax.

President Trump Says Homicides In Philadelphia Are 'terribly Increasing.' They Are Actually Down.

By Mark Berman

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

Speaking in Philadelphia on Thursday, President Trump made one of his trademark digressions into a discussion of violent crime.

Mentioning the increase in violent crime in some major cities nationwide — which is true, homicides have gone up in numerous big cities — Trump also pointed to the city where he was speaking during a Republican strategy retreat.

"Here in Philadelphia, the murder rate has been steady — I mean just terribly increasing," he said.

The opposite is true. According to the Philadelphia Police Department, the city finished last year with 277 homicides, which was actually down from the 280 killings seen a year earlier.

All told, homicides are down considerably over the past decade after reaching 391 homicides in 2007:

Homicides are up so far this year, though. Police say there have been 27 homicides through Wednesday night, up from 17 at the same point last year. But that is too small a sample size to say violence is "terribly increasing."

Trump has repeatedly weighed in on violent crime, using his acceptance speech at the Republican convention ("crime and terrorism and lawlessness") and his inaugural address ("American carnage") to paint a dire picture of a crime-ridden country. While some of his comments and characterizations are correct, he tends to exaggerate or misstate other things when discussing the issue. For example, the murder rate is not the highest it has been for 45 years, despite Trump's repeated claim that this is the case.

While violent crime and murders both went up in 2015, and multiple big cities reported similar increases last year, the levels of violence still remain far below what they were decades earlier, and the upticks follow years of consistent declines. However, criminologists and other experts warn against drawing too many conclusions from such a short span of time.

Trump's Call For 'Feds' In Chicago Confounds City Leaders, Police Experts

By Andrea Noble

Washington Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump's threat to "send in the feds" to Chicago if the city is unable to reduce violent crime is stirring consternation among law enforcement and policing experts, who say the president's comments could be interpreted broadly as anything from sending in the National Guard to increasing federal funding for law enforcement.

Responding to the president's criticism on Wednesday, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel said that while he welcomes federal involvement and funding, the notion of sending the National Guard into the city is "antithetical" to the spirit of community policing and trust he's working to repair.

"Chicago, like other cities that are dealing with gun violence, wants the partnership with federal law enforcement entities in a more significant way than we [have] today — whether that's the FBI, the DEA and the ATF," Mr. Emanuel said, suggesting that investment in schools and mentoring children also need to be part of the equation.

In the tweet Tuesday night, Mr. Trump wrote, "If Chicago doesn't fix the horrible 'carnage' going on, 228 shootings in 2017 with 42 killings (up 24% from 2016), I will send in the Feds!"

White House press secretary Sean Spicer sought to clarify the president's comments Wednesday, saying his concern was spurred by "turning on the television and seeing Americans get killed by shootings."

"What he wants to do is provide the resources of the federal government, and it can span a bunch of things. There's no one thing," Mr. Spicer said, citing federal law enforcement aid that could be requested by Illinois' governor or provided to the state's U.S. Attorney's Offices.

Mr. Spicer said any next steps in addressing the city's violence will involve a dialogue with the mayor "to figure out what a path forward can be."

While the federal government can take varied actions to help local police combat crime, policing experts say one thing is clear — the federal government can't simply take over as the chief law enforcement agency in the city.

"The feds don't do policing," said Daniel Nagin, a criminologist and professor of Public Policy and Statistics at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College. "A critical ingredient to getting this under control is going to require aggressive police action. Only the Chicago police can do that."

James Pasco, executive director of the National Fraternal Order of Police, said Wednesday that he interprets Mr. Trump's comments as directing more federal law enforcement to assist Chicago police, not instructing them to take over.

"The feds can be tremendously helpful, and we support the president's call for assistance," said Mr. Pasco, noting that Chicago police have the principal responsibility and are best equipped to lead the efforts to reduce crime. "They [feds] are there to assist, not to take over."

The Chicago Police Department is in the midst of what could be a major overhaul, and in recent months has suffered from a lack of community trust as a result of high-profile law enforcement shootings of black civilians.

'Not immediately clear'

A Department of Justice report released just before Mr. Trump's inauguration concluded officers were quick to use excessive and deadly force, failed to de-escalate tense situations and engaged in other behavior that not only violated constitutional rights, but diminished the department's ability to fight crime. After the release of critical reports in other cities, a federal judge has often overseen implementation of police reform plans, but it is unclear what action the Trump administration will take.

Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson on Wednesday told the Chicago Tribune that he was baffled by the unspecified nature of Mr. Trump's comments about sending in the federal government.

"The statement is so broad. I have no idea what he's talking about," said Superintendent Johnson.

The city's top cop said he would oppose any plan that included deploying the National Guard to quell the violence, but he would be supportive of federal partnerships aimed at prosecuting more gun crimes.

Tim Lynch, director of the Cato Institute's Project on Criminal Justice, said the federal law enforcement agencies could all be asked to step up coordination with the Chicago Police Department, and likely have already done so.

Mr. Lynch suggested the U.S. Marshals Service, for instance, could prioritize cases in order to help locate potential witnesses to unsolved homicides in an effort to make arrests while the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives might add extra resources in the Chicago area to target illegal gunrunners or wanted offenders police believe are tied to ongoing violence in order to get them off the street.

"This has already been going on to some extent though, so when Mr. Trump says 'I will take further action,' it's not immediately clear what he means," he said. "If it goes beyond, then it could be very disturbing in terms of what he perceives the role of the federal government to be in situations like this."

While Mr. Spicer suggested federal aid for law enforcement could be made available, the city is at risk of losing federal dollars allocated for other purposes as a result of its status as a so-called "sanctuary city" — one of hundreds of jurisdictions across the country that limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement agents.

Mr. Trump on Wednesday signed an executive order that would deny federal grants, except those deemed necessary for law enforcement purposes, to any sanctuary jurisdiction.

Mr. Emanuel, who previously served as former President Obama's chief of staff, said Wednesday that Chicago would remain a sanctuary city.

Freddy Martinez, director of Lucy Parsons Labs, which has advocated more oversight and transparency in the Chicago Police Department, said Mr. Trump's and Mr. Emanuel's stances on the issue are worrisome.

"Whatever happens with sanctuary cities and possible defunding of programs, that is going to hit the things that [are] driving the inequality and the things driving the violence," Mr. Martinez said.

Of the funding destined for police the Trump administration might allocate, Mr. Martinez said he doesn't think it will quell the violence.

"I don't think it's going to help. It's going to militarize police further," he said.

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Trump Criticizes 'S.N.L.' Writer Who Joked About His Son Barron

By Dave Itzkoff

New York Times, January 26, 2017

President Trump weighed in on a widely criticized joke made on Twitter by a writer for "Saturday Night Live" about his 10-year-old son, Barron, calling the writer "terrible" and the incident "a disgrace" in an interview broadcast Thursday night on Fox News.

In the conversation with Mr. Trump, the Fox News host Sean Hannity described Barron as "a wonderful, smart, charming kid," adding: "And then, they attack him. That's got to hurt you and Melania."

Mr. Trump replied: "Well, 'Saturday Night Live' — a person from 'Saturday Night Live' was terrible. It's a failing show. It's not funny. Alec Baldwin's a disaster. He's terrible on the show and, by the way, I don't mind some humor but it's terrible. But for them to attack, for NBC to attack my 10-year-old son —"

Mr. Hannity said, "Horrible."

Mr. Trump continued: "It's a disgrace. He's a great boy. And it's not an easy thing for him. Believe me."

Mr. Trump's remarks were reported by Deadline.com.

Last Friday, during Mr. Trump's inauguration, Katie Rich, a writer for "Saturday Night Live," wrote on her Twitter account that "Barron will be this country's first homeschool shooter."

Amid an outcry, Ms. Rich deleted the tweet. She was placed on an indefinite suspension from the show, and her name did not appear in the credits of the episode broadcast last weekend. On Monday, she posted an apology on Twitter, writing: "I deeply regret my actions & offensive words. It was inexcusable & I'm so sorry."

Mr. Trump, who hosted "S.N.L." in November 2015 while a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, has become a frequent critic of the show and of Mr. Baldwin, who portrays him in comedy sketches.

A statement released on Tuesday by the White House press office said: "It is a longstanding tradition that the children of presidents are afforded the opportunity to grow up outside of the political spotlight. The White House fully expects this tradition to continue."

NBC declined to comment on Thursday night.

Trump Strategist Steve Bannon Says Media Should 'Keep Its Mouth Shut'

By Michael M. Grynbaum

New York Times, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON — Stephen K. Bannon, President Trump's chief White House strategist, laced into the American press during an interview on Wednesday evening, arguing that news organizations had been "humiliated" by an election outcome few anticipated, and repeatedly describing the media as "the opposition party" of the current administration.

"The media should be embarrassed and humiliated and keep its mouth shut and just listen for awhile," Mr. Bannon said during a telephone call.

"I want you to quote this," Mr. Bannon added. "The media here is the opposition party. They don't understand this country. They still do not understand why Donald Trump is the president of the United States."

The scathing assessment — delivered by one of Mr. Trump's most trusted and influential advisers, in the first days of his presidency — comes at a moment of high tension between the news media and the administration, with skirmishes over the size of Mr. Trump's inaugural crowd and the president's false claims that millions of illegal votes by undocumented immigrants swayed the popular vote against him.

Mr. Bannon, who rarely grants interviews to journalists outside of Breitbart News, the provocative right-wing website he ran until last August, was echoing comments by Mr. Trump this weekend, when the president said he was in "a running war" with the media and called journalists "among the most dishonest people on earth."

During a call to discuss Sean M. Spicer, the president's press secretary, Mr. Bannon ratcheted up the criticism, offering a broad indictment of the news media as biased against Mr. Trump and out of touch with the American public. That's an argument familiar to readers of Breitbart and followers of Trump-friendly personalities like Sean Hannity.

"The elite media got it dead wrong, 100 percent dead wrong," Mr. Bannon said of the election, calling it "a humiliating defeat that they will never wash away, that will always be there."

"The mainstream media has not fired or terminated anyone associated with following our campaign," Mr. Bannon said. "Look at the Twitter feeds of those people: they were outright activists of the Clinton campaign." (He did not name specific reporters or editors.)

"That's why you have no power," Mr. Bannon added. "You were humiliated."

Of all of Mr. Trump's advisers in the White House, Mr. Bannon is the one tasked with implementing the nationalist vision that Mr. Trump channeled during the later months of the campaign, one that stemmed from Mr. Bannon himself. And in many ways Mr. Trump's first week has put into action that vision — from the description of "American carnage" Mr. Trump laid out in his inauguration speech, to a series of executive actions outlining policy on trade agreements, immigration, the building of a border wall and the demands that Mexico pay for it.

He is one of the strongest forces in a White House with competing power centers. A savvy manipulator of the press, and a proud provocateur, Mr. Bannon was among the few advisers in Mr. Trump's circle who was said to have urged on Mr. Spicer's confrontational, emotional statement to a

shocked White House briefing room on Saturday, when the White House disputed press reports on the inauguration crowd size. He mostly shares Mr. Trump's view that the news media has misunderstood the movement that the president rode into office.

On the telephone, Mr. Bannon spoke in blunt but calm tones, peppered with a dose of profanities, and humorously referred to himself at one point as "Darth Vader." He said, with ironic relish, that Mr. Trump was elected by a surge of support from "the working class hobbits and deplorables."

The conversation was initiated by Mr. Bannon to offer praise for Mr. Spicer, who has been criticized this week for making false claims at the White House podium about the attendance of Mr. Trump's inaugural crowd, for calling reporters dishonest and lecturing them about what stories to write and for failing to disavow Mr. Trump's lie about widespread voter fraud in the election.

Asked if he was concerned that Mr. Spicer had lost credibility with the news media, Mr. Bannon chortled. "Are you kidding me?" he said. "We think that's a badge of honor. 'Questioning his integrity' — are you kidding me? The media has zero integrity, zero intelligence, and no hard work."

"You're the opposition party," Mr. Bannon said. "Not the Democratic Party. You're the opposition party. The media's the opposition party."

Mr. Bannon mostly referred to the "elite" or "mainstream" media, but he cited The New York Times and The Washington Post by name.

"The paper of record for our beloved republic, The New York Times, should be absolutely ashamed and humiliated," Mr. Bannon said. "They got it 100 percent wrong."

He added that he has been a reader of The Times for most of his adult life.

In His First Major TV Interview As President, Trump Is Endlessly Obsessed About His Popularity

By Jenna Johnson

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

The way President Trump tells it, the meandering, falsehood-filled, self-involved speech that he gave at the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters last weekend was one of the greatest addresses ever given.

"That speech was a home run," Trump told ABC News just a few minutes into his first major television interview since moving into the White House. "See what Fox said. They said it was one of the great speeches. They showed the people applauding and screaming. … I got a standing ovation. In fact, they said it was the biggest standing ovation since Peyton Manning had won the Super Bowl, and they said it was equal. I got a standing ovation. It lasted for a long period of time."

The most powerful man in the world continued: "You probably ran it live. I know when I do good speeches. I know when I do bad speeches. That speech was a total home run. They loved it. … People loved it. They loved it. They gave me a standing ovation for a long period of time. They never even sat down, most of them, during the speech. There was love in the room. You and other networks covered it very inaccurately. … That speech was a good speech. And you and a couple of other networks tried to downplay that speech. And it was very, very unfortunate that you did."

Trump brushed off the suggestion that it was disrespectful to deliver the speech — which included musings about magazine covers and crowd sizes — in front of a hallowed memorial to CIA agents killed in the line of duty. He insisted that the crowd was filled with "the people of the CIA," not his supporters, and could have been several times larger than it was. Had a poll been taken of the 350-person audience to gauge the speech's greatness, Trump said the result would have been "350 to nothing" in his favor.

The lengthy interview, which aired late Wednesday night, provided a glimpse of the president and his state-of-mind on his fifth full day in office. It revealed a man who is obsessed with his own popularity and eager to provide evidence of his likability, even if that evidence doesn't match reality.

Trump insisted that he could have "very, very easily" won the popular vote in the election — which concluded more than 11 weeks ago — had he simply tried. He again suggested that Democrat Hillary Clinton won the popular vote because of widespread voter fraud, of which there is no evidence. He hinted that he thinks voter fraud might have also helped elect former president Barack Obama, whose favorability ratings were higher than his on Inauguration Day. He justified some of his unsubstantiated claims by saying that millions of his supporters agree with him. He did acknowledge that his own approval rating is "pretty bad," but he blamed that on the media.

Trump plugged an "extraordinary poll" that he said found that people "loved and liked" his inaugural address. He again claimed to have "the biggest crowd in the history of inaugural speeches" and accused the media of demeaning his supporters by underreporting turnout. Trump also took credit for the Dow Jones industrial average closing above 20,000 for the first time on Wednesday, referred to a former rival as "one of the combatants that I fought to get here" and said that a recent visitor told him that their meeting "was the single greatest meeting I've ever had with anybody."

Even some of the discussion of policy seemed to come back to the fight for popularity, with Trump summing up his plan to replace the Affordable Care Act in this place: "Millions of people will be happy. Right now, you have millions and millions and millions of people that are unhappy."

Four times, the president referred to himself in the third-person.

The interview revealed just how preoccupied Trump is with two variables that are gumming up his claim of being widely beloved: Losing the popular vote to Clinton and hosting an inauguration crowd that was smaller than in previous years.

"I would've won the popular vote if I was campaigning for the popular vote," Trump said. "I would've gone to California, where I didn't go at all. I would've gone to New York, where I didn't campaign at all. I would've gone to a couple of places that I didn't go to. And I would've won that much easier than winning the electoral college."

And even without trying to win the popular vote, Trump has said that he did win the popular vote — if you don't count the millions of fraudulent votes he believes were cast, although state elections officials say they have seen no evidence of that.

"You have people that are registered who are dead, who are illegals," said Trump, who has called for an investigation. "You have people registered in two states. They're registered in New York and New Jersey. They vote twice. There are millions of votes, in my opinion."

When pressed to back up his accusations, Trump pointed to a 2012 Pew Center report. When ABC's David Muir said the author of that report found "no evidence of voter fraud," Trump attacked that author.

"Excuse me," the president snapped. "Then why did he write the report?"

"He's groveling again," Trump said, repeating the word that he used to describe the gesture he made when imitating New York Times reporter Serge Kovaleski, who wrote an article in 2001 that Trump recently tried to use as evidence that thousands of Muslims celebrated 9/11 on New Jersey rooftops, a rumor that has been repeatedly debunked. Many have interpreted Trump's movements as mocking Kovaleski's physical disability, not mimicking a person groveling.

"You know," Trump continued, "I always talk about the reporters that grovel when they want to write something that you want to hear, but not necessarily millions of people want to hear, or have to hear."

Muir attempted to get the president back on topic: "So you've launched an investigation?"

"We're going to launch an investigation to find out," Trump said. "And then the next time — and I will say this: Of those votes cast, none of them come to me. None of them come to me. They would all be for the other side. None of them come to me."

Muir listed the reactions of prominent Republicans who do not agree with Trump on this and are alarmed that he is challenging the credibility of the election system.

"Well, let me just tell you, you know what's important? Millions of people agree with me when I say that," Trump said. "If you would have looked on one of the other networks and all of the people that were calling in, they're saying, 'We agree with Mr. Trump. We agree.' They're very smart people."

Muir then transitioned into Trump's inauguration crowd size, asking the president why his press secretary delivered a statement on that topic on Saturday.

"Does that send a message to the American people that that's more important than some of the very pressing issues?" Muir said.

"Part of my whole victory was that the men and women of this country who have been forgotten will never be forgotten again," Trump said. "We had a massive crowd of people. We had a crowd. I looked over that sea of people and I said to myself: 'Wow.' And I've seen crowds before. Big, big crowds. That was some crowd. When I looked at the numbers that happened to come in from all of the various sources, we had the biggest audience in the history of inaugural speeches. I said, the men and women that I was talking to who came out and voted will never be forgotten again. Therefore, I won't allow you or other people like you to demean that crowd and to demean the people that came to Washington, D.C., from faraway places because they like me. But more importantly, they like what I'm saying."

Later in the interview, Muir asked the president about the hundreds of thousands of people who gathered in major cities and red-state towns across the country on Saturday to voice their opposition to his presidency. Trump admitted that the crowds were "large," but then argued that an antiabortion march scheduled for Friday is also expecting a large crowd.

"You will have a very large crowd of people. I don't know, as large or larger — some people say it's going to be larger," Trump said.

Muir cut him off: "I don't want to compare crowd sizes again."

But Trump did. As the two toured Trump's new home, the president stopped in front of a framed photo of his inauguration crowd.

"Here's a picture of the crowd," the president explained to the nation he now leads. "Now, the audience was the biggest ever, but this crowd was massive. Look how far back it goes. This crowd was massive. And I would actually take that camera and take your time [scanning the crowd] if you want to know the truth."

Then the president took Muir to see another image, a panoramic photo by a local artist who has taken the exact same shot at each inauguration since Reagan was in office. (The other years were not presented for contrast.)

"One thing this shows is how far over they go here," Trump said, walking up close to the print and pointing as he spoke. "Look. Look how far this is. This goes all the way down here. All the way down. Nobody sees that. You don't see that in the pictures. But when you look at this tremendous sea of love — I call it a sea of love. It's really something

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special, that all these people traveled here from all parts of the country, maybe the world, but all parts of the country. Hard for them to get here. Many of these people were the forgotten men and women, many of them. And they loved what I had to say. More importantly, they're going to love the result."

Washington's New Normal: A Trump Protest Spectacle A Day

By Petula Dvorak

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

We began Wednesday morning with the sight of Greenpeace activists scaling a 270-foot construction crane in downtown Washington and unfurling a gigantic orange and black banner that bore the message: "RESIST." We ended the day with several hundred protesters marching to the White House to condemn President Trump's executive order on immigration.

Welcome to Trump's capital. It's a spectacle a day here.

Self-proclaimed anarchists swarmed through downtown D.C. on Trump's Inauguration Day, torching a limousine, smashing bus-stop glass and vandalizing businesses. Then hundreds of thousands of people massed on the Mall the following day for the Women's March on Washington, waving clever and sometimes scathing signs aimed at the new commander in chief: "There Is So Much Wrong It Cannot Fit on This Sign" and "We Want a Leader, Not a Creepy Tweeter."

Coming Friday: The annual March for Life, which will bring tens of thousands of newly energized antiabortion demonstrators to the nation's front yard.

Even the country's scientists are planning a march on Washington.

Meetings? Deadlines? Schedules? All plans are soft in the District, a city where people chanting in the streets or rappelling off construction cranes bring traffic to a halt. The working world is feeling it. #Thisisnotnormal.

I have to confess that I've always been a street protest skeptic.

This comes from decades of covering protests. I've double-time marched backward for miles, interviewing people about apartheid, gay rights, abortion, Rodney King, racism, Palestine, globalization, layoffs, public dancing, the World Bank, female genital mutilation, women's rights, the death penalty, homelessness and war after war. I've slept in the bushes to hang with the protesters, I've been in the control rooms as police chiefs strategize riot control.

Yet I'll never forget talking with the banker in his crisp suit and air-conditioned office, looking out the window at the protesters below and just laughing, laughing, laughing. Because he knew they'd eventually be gone and nothing would change.

That reality dulled the power of protest for me.

Even one of the founders of the Occupy Wall Street movement, which spread to 82 countries and had millions of people in the streets, agreed with my assessment.

"The end of protest is the proliferation of ineffective protests that are more like a ritualized performance of children than a mature, revolutionary challenge to the status quo," said Micah White, who wrote "The End of Protest — A New Playbook for Revolution" after the Occupy movement had the world's attention, then sputtered and stalled in a pile of ragged tents and trashed city parks.

"Activists who rush into the streets tomorrow and repeat yesterday's tired tactics will not bring an end to Trump nor will they transfer sovereign power to the people," White wrote. "There are only two ways to achieve sovereignty in this world. Activists can win elections or win wars. There is no third option."

But this time feels different. Keep it up, protesters, because this time, it's working. You're getting to him.

This daily public humiliation — the massive, televised rejection of the direction of this administration — Donald Trump cares about that.

The war hawks didn't care. The bankers didn't care. The party hard-liners didn't care. But Trump cares.

He's a showman, a ringmaster, a ratings junkie. And nothing angers an attention addict more than a bigger, louder show next door.

This is Trump's language.

It's not going to change policy, but it will rankle and distract him. And it will signal to the rest of the world that most of America isn't on board the lying train to Absurdistan.

The letters and calls to Congress, the preparation for 2018 elections and the full-throated participation in all levels of the democratic process are ultimately the only path to real change.

But meanwhile, the protests will be effective if they're peaceful, on point and relentless.

Remember all those post-election vandals arrested in Oregon who didn't even vote? Nope. Can't do that again.

And no more torching limos. The one that was set ablaze on K Street in front of The Washington Post belonged to a Muslim immigrant who has no idea if his insurance will cover the tens of thousands of dollars of damage. And the one-percenter riding in it just called another one.

Here's my protest prescription: Anti-Trump activists need go to every single Trump hotel in this country and around the world and set up legal, peaceful, annoying-as-hell vigils. Occupy them day and night. Take shifts, don't leave. Make it really uncomfortable to stay there.

Oh, he'll see that. And it will infuriate him.

This should be the new normal. This time, it will work.

Twitter: @petulad

'They Never Saw This Coming': A Q&A With Kellyanne Conway

By Joe Heim

Washington Post Magazine, January 26, 2017

When Kellyanne Conway took over as Donald Trump's presidential campaign manager in August — his third in under a year — there were few signs that Trump would emerge victorious on election night just three months later. He was trailing Hillary Clinton in some polls by 10 points nationally, and the gap was widening in battleground states. Twitter attacks by Trump on Khizr Khan, the father of an American Muslim Army captain killed in Iraq, and his metastasizing list of other Twitter and campaign rally barbs weren't helping his favorability ratings, particularly among women.

Conway was known in political circles for her research firm, the Polling Company/WomanTrend, which she launched in 1995 in part to provide candidates and companies with studies and analysis of the concerns and aspirations of American women.

Even though she had criticized Trump on numerous occasions earlier in the year, Conway was seen as someone who could bring discipline to the first-time candidate. And as a longtime Republican strategist and pollster with experience working for male candidates (Newt Gingrich, Ted Cruz, Mike Pence) who had trouble appealing to women voters, she was seen by politicos as well-suited to help Trump's troubled bid. Conway, who turned 50 on Inauguration Day, now serves as counselor to the president in the White House, where she immediately made news defending what she called "alternative facts" related to inauguration attendance.

[In his first major TV interview as president, Trump is endlessly obsessed with his popularity]

The only child of a single mother, Conway grew up in a working-class household in Atco, N.J. She has long-standing ties to Washington, having graduated from Trinity Washington University and George Washington University Law School. She and her husband, George, have four children.

This interview took place at Trump Tower a week before the inauguration.

How would you describe the past six months for you?

The past six months for me, professionally, have been the apex of my career. People say, "Congratulations, Kellyanne. You're successful because you work hard." I do work hard, but so many people, so many women in this country work hard. But they don't often get what I got, which was my shot and my time to help manage and execute on a plan and a vision at the highest levels of politics and government.

And that's very rewarding to me because in many ways my life in the last six months really reflects the American Dream writ large. I was raised by a single mom, in a unconventional household of four Italian Catholic women, and I was the first person to go to college, let alone law school, in my family. I started my business at 28. Like a Generation Xer, I married later, had children later and was very focused on my career. I'm a granddaughter of immigrants, and it's a very common American experience.

But the last six months have been exhausting, exhilarating, heady and roller-coaster-like in terms of all the situations and circumstances that just come our way constantly when you're on Team Trump. At the same time there was a certain steadiness and composure and decorum and calmness that I've experienced. Part of that is age/wisdom, and part of that is trying to be an anchor in the storm. The storm being not the campaign or Mr. Trump, the storm being all of the situational, circumstantial incoming that we constantly took.

You mentioned your mother. On election night did she say anything to you?

She told me for weeks and months before election night that Donald Trump would win. But on election night she told me what she's been telling me my entire life, which is, basically, be yourself, have fun and accept whatever God has coming. When you hear that from your mother, "Accept what God has coming," that has to be everything from a broken relationship or a broken heart when you're younger to not gaining entry into your reach college to burying a loved one unexpectedly. But my mother telling me that for years also made me see what a blessing and opportunity it was for Donald Trump to ask me to be his campaign manager.

How big a deal is it to you that you were the first female campaign manager to win a presidential election?

It's a bigger deal now in retrospect. I never gave it much thought during the campaign. And neither did Donald Trump. The day that we discussed this role of campaign manager, he never said, "Hey, this will be great. I'll make history with the first Republican female campaign manager." He never said this will help with women's votes — he never said any of that. So I appreciate very much that I was promoted based on skills and vision and compatibility with him. And him knowing that I would respectfully execute on his vision. This is his candidacy, this is his voice, his choice, and I'm just one member of an amazing team to help execute on that.

But looking back, I feel the enormity of that moment in time, mainly because of all the people I've heard from. I consider myself more passionate than emotional, but it is nothing short of moving to hear from women and girls from all over the country and from men who say, "My daughters think you're a role model."

You don't consider yourself a feminist?

I don't consider myself a feminist. I think my generation isn't a big fan of labels. My favorite label is mommy. I feel like the feminist movement has been hijacked by the pro-abortion movement or the anti-male sentiments that you read in some of their propaganda and writings. I'm not anti-male. One does

not need to be pro-female and call yourself a feminist, when with it comes that whole anti-male culture where we want young boys to sit down and shut up in the classroom. And we have all of these commercials that show what a feckless boob the man in the house is. That's not the way I see the men in my life, most especially my 12-year-old son. I consider myself a postfeminist. I consider myself one of those women who is a product of her choices, not a victim of her circumstances.

Have you talked to your father since the election?

Oh, many times.

What's your relationship with him?

My father left when I was very young. I didn't meet him until I was 12 or 13. We had no alimony, no child support. He went on to have another family. He's been married four times. [Now] he's an active part of our lives, in part because he wants that, and in part because he deserves that. My operating principle as a typical Generation Xer, a child of divorce, is that you don't pass that on to the next generation. If there's hurt or there's pain or there's regret or there's been anger and sadness, there's no reason to pass that on.

Did you have to go through a difficult period to come to terms with that, or has that always been true for you?

No. I think when I see my husband's positive and loving relationship with our three daughters, and we have a son, I realize the unspoken scourge of paternal rejection. And how that had a negative impact on some of my earlier choices and certainly circumstances. But as I age and have more wisdom and seasoning and self-confidence, the positive effect of that is to recognize how nice it is that my daughters have constant paternal reaffirmation and love. But it's also made me independent. And maybe healthily skeptical of some people and situations. I didn't get married until I was 34, and I had been very independent, started my own business, paid off my student loans, had lived on my own since I was 18.

In the early part of last year, you were very critical of Donald Trump. You called his supporters "downright nasty." You said Trump built his businesses on "the backs of the little guy." You said he should release his tax returns, said his language was unpresidential. So why did you decide in July to join his campaign?

Well, those are cherry-picked comments. There's also an entire body of evidence that I always have supported him, thought he added a great deal to the political conversation and to giving people more hope and the freshest alternative to conventional politics that they told pollsters for 30 years that they wanted.

Yes, but when you said —

Yeah, those were situational. You have to understand something. I grew up around Atlantic City. My mother worked there for 21 years, and that was our sole source of support. She was left with no alimony, no child support whatsoever when I was 2 or 3. When the casinos came to Atlantic City, and that included Donald Trump and others, it revitalized an entire corridor between Atlantic City and Philadelphia. People then had jobs and benefits and opportunities, and I benefited directly from that through my mother and other family members.

And I don't think he should release his tax returns now that I know more than I knew when I made that comment, which is that he's under audit. And he has been advised by his accountants and his lawyers to not release them. And I know firsthand as a pollster that Americans are much more interested in knowing what their tax returns will look like when he's president than in seeing his tax returns.

[A recent Washington Post-ABC News poll found that 74 percent of Americans believe Trump should release his tax returns, with 41 percent saying they care "a lot" that he does so.]

You co-wrote a book, "What Women Really Want: How American Women Are Quietly Erasing Political, Racial, Class, and Religious Lines to Change the Way We Live." Ten years later, have those lines been erased, or are they bolder than they've ever been?

For some women they've been erased because women of all races and ethnic backgrounds, age groups, socioeconomic status, geographic differences, all work together. They share a common love of this country and the elation/struggles of what it means to be a woman in 2017. But for some women and for people who cover women or speak about women, those lines are somewhat bolder and brighter. I think in politics they seem brighter and bolder. But in everyday parlance, everyday culture, that's just not true. We're the peacemakers, we're the great negotiators, the leaders and the managers of our households, of our workplaces.

But why is that not being played out in politics?

Because politics goes for the heat and not the light most of the time. Politics looks at division and subtraction, not at addition and multiplication. It's congenitally negative. It's corrosively negative, and I think that's too bad. I'm just one small person in this political universe, but I do know that I infused some level of positivity and respectfulness to the process. And I'm very grateful to have had that opportunity.

You pointed out early on last year that Hillary Clinton wasn't doing well with women and that women were not going to vote for her simply because she was a woman. Would Hillary Clinton have won if you had been her campaign manager?

[Long pause.] No, Hillary Clinton could not have won this election cycle for a few reasons. One is she could never really escape the fact that, including according to The Washington Post polling, that persistent, nagging majorities of Americans find her to be dishonest and untrustworthy and didn't particularly like her, either. Two, it's not clear to me that this woman who has surrounded herself with talented professionals — I'm very fond of Robby Mook, her campaign

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manager, for example, and I have a cordial relationship with Huma Abedin — had ever surrounded herself with people who would actually tell her no. Or that this isn't a good idea. Or that this isn't working. Which every leader needs. The other thing is that the question for Americans was not, Would you vote for a woman? But would you vote for this woman? It wasn't a hypothetical; it was Hillary.

I want to go back to October 7th, which is the day the video came out with Trump talking about women and saying he could "grab them by the p---y."

He didn't say he did that.

Right, he said he could do that. But when I first heard that I thought there was no way someone who said those words could get elected president of the United States. Did you think that?

No, never.

What was your reaction when you first heard it?

I had several reactions. First was to ask him about it, and we discussed it. And I'll leave it to his public comments about how he felt about it. He recorded the statement right here. It was heartfelt, it was genuine and those were his words. He apologized; he said he doesn't recognize that, meaning that's not who he is. And that he's running for president for a number of reasons, and for the American people, that have nothing to do with that.

My reaction, knowing voters as I did, was that we'll take a hit in the polls — this will be an obsessive story for God knows how long, and people will draw the wrong conclusions. The pundits will draw the wrong conclusions. They'll say this will kill him among women. And women will look at that and some will say, "I can't vote for him." How many of them already weren't voting for him is the question nobody asks. Other women will say, "He's right, it's locker-room talk. I don't like it, but I know men who talk like that." Or "I listen to rap music artists or comedians who make zillions of dollars talking like that." They'll say, "I don't like it, but it's not the totality of the man, and it's not the totality of the candidate who has promised me bigger things, like my job not going to Mexico or China, like a more affordable, accessible health-care act that doesn't crush small business and make promises it never kept

to millions of Americans who never had coverage."

Was that the lowest part of the campaign for you?

It was probably the most difficult part, but really only temporarily. And the temporary part was because I knew he'd stay in the race. I know who he is. I know his steadfastness and his tenacity and his never backing down, never shirking from a fight, never backing down from a commitment that he made. And I also knew he was going to get on that plane and go to that second debate in St. Louis, and indeed he did.

You have four kids. Did you have to explain to them why it was okay that someone who said this would be president?

It's a little bit of a cheap shot to raise my kids into a question like that. I just want to say that because people do it all the time.

Let me explain why I don't think it's a cheap shot. A lot of people with kids had to explain that to them.

Right, but I already had to explain to my children many times why Hillary Clinton lied so many times and, frankly, why she made a different choice when faced with a cheating husband than my mother did. That was to my older children. I had to explain many times why the media were so unfair to Donald Trump. "Why would they say this about Donald Trump, Mom, if you're working for him?" Because kids and others unfortunately think if it's on TV it's true. That probably is no longer the case because people realize that no one on TV is under oath and anything can be said in a screaming chyron or, in the case of The Washington Post, unfair and untrue headlines that are just there for clickbait.

Have we had unfair and untrue headlines?

Oh, yes, yes. It's been discussed with Marty Baron and Fred Hiatt and Jeff Bezos because I just saw [Bezos] last week. In any event, it's tougher to explain to my children why people who don't know me would say I'm stupid or ugly or even worse online. It's tougher for them to listen to people on TV laugh at me or Donald Trump, ridicule us and never allow us to really get our message across. That's tougher.

On Twitter and Facebook and social media, people really do say nasty things about you.

That's what I hear.

But you don't really respond to any of it.

I don't engage. Why would I? I'm going to let someone redefine and unravel me based on 140 characters or less? And that is a lesson I try to teach my children. Why would I engage strangers? Why would I engage Never Trumpers who are snarkily trying to undercut us. It's a combination of professional jealousy and a lack of political instincts. They never saw this coming. And I understand why a lot of people feel embarrassed and why they're looking over their shoulders wondering will they be the first head to roll at this newspaper or this publication or this TV station. Because they were so aggressively bad in their predictions and they didn't understand America and we did. I'm told I'm attacked on Twitter all the time, but the fact is if you're so busy that you can't read most of the criticism, or most of the praise, it really does keep you grounded.

[Opinion | Trump is obsessed with what his staff wears. Don't let their costumes distract you.]

Why do you think Mr. Trump can't do that? Why does he respond to all the —

He doesn't, honestly. You're not going to find a more vilified, attacked politician.

Do you think the media should change the way it covers Trump?

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We believe in a free and fair media, but with freedom comes responsibility. It would be great for the media to be less presumptively negative and skeptical and more open and honest about their past unfair and untoward coverage of him and their obligation to deliver news, not opinion masquerading as news or their personal beliefs masquerading as news.

I was really astonished to see respected print and electronic journalists outwardly admit during the campaign that Donald Trump forces them to suspend the objective standards of journalism. That is just astonishing because their whole idea was: Stop him, stop him, stop him, which implicitly was: Elect her, elect her. That's not their job. Many in the media had their thumbs on the electoral scales this year, and that's totally inappropriate and anti-democratic.

That should not be confused with "We're going to be tough on him, we're going to ask the tough questions." Sure, got it. Check. You're going to ask tough questions. But that is so fundamentally different from, to coin a phrase, actively trying to interfere in election results and pervert our democracy. Because as with the hacking, the media's attempt to interfere with democracy and elect Hillary Clinton failed, too.

The president-elect yesterday called CNN fake news. Is that helpful?

Did he do it gratuitously or did he do it in response to the fact that they had published an article online and then talked about it on air that basically gave everybody a GPS and a map and instructions on how to find the BuzzFeed dump of a 35-page document that is not an intelligence report, that was an Internet report assembled by anti-Trump operatives?

Presidents and politicians have always criticized news stories, but not —

This is historic and you know it. No one has ever faced the deluge of negativity and criticism that Donald Trump has. It's just a fact. But by the way, we have to say thank you to many in the mainstream media because it helped us win.

It was an elite rejection election in that, fundamentally, it was us versus them, and it turns out there are a heck of a lot more them than us, us being people in politics or media or the donor class. Or in the consulting class, which is nothing short of embarrassing. These noncreative nonthinkers who haven't come up with a creative or original idea in 30 years are telling us who can win, who can lose three years before an election? That's over.

Donald Trump would say one thing or someone would say one thing about him, and it would literally be breaking news for 10 days. And everybody would dissect it. And I know he's much better for ratings and clicks, because Hillary Clinton was neither particularly liked nor seen as animated or engaging, but some journalists took leave of their senses and surrendered what they learned in journalism school.

If you look at Twitter feeds of some folks, what they write about Donald Trump would never pass editorial muster. And if you're Joe Blow from The Washington Post and you say tweets are my own and you're tweeting at 10:15 a.m. as you're walking in to a presidential press conference or a Trump rally, then your tweets are not your own. You just tweeted in your suit and tie at 10:15 a.m. when you're clearly in your professional capacity. And it's zing, zing, zing, zing, zing against Donald Trump. That's irresponsible, and by the way it's not journalism.

[The Post's policy is that journalists can use personal social media accounts but they remain, at all times, Washington Post journalists.]

You've been pro-life for a long time and active on that issue and plan to take part in this year's March for Life. Why is that so important to you?

For several reasons. One is as a culture I fear that we're becoming too inured and inoculated against how precious life really is. Whether it's in the womb or at the end of our years. This out-of-sight, out-of-mind mentality has run headstrong now into science and medicine. We see things now that you and I didn't see when we were kids. You pull up a sonogram, and no one says to you in a patronizing or threatening way, "Admit it, this is a baby!" Or, "This is just uterine material."

They basically say, "Oh, my God, look at that heart beat at eight weeks." The New York Times, of all places, had a front-page story above the fold about how with proper medical intervention, babies born at or before 24 weeks can survive outside the womb. Wow, this is amazing. And for us to just look the other way and pretend that abortion is not used by plenty of people as birth control? But I'm also a very nonjudgmental person. I understand why women are pro-choice. I understand why women get abortions.

Do you know any women who have had abortions?

Many.

Do you think they shouldn't have been allowed to have them?

No, I don't judge them.

But that would be the law, that's what would —

No, here's why I don't judge them. And I've helped several of them before, during and after. To a person, they all feel some level of regret. And I help them navigate that, too, because they shouldn't feel that way.

Twenty-five years from now what do you want people to say about you?

That I was an excellent mother and a great friend and I brought honor and respect to what I did. I was fair and judicious to people. I had compassion and empathy for those less fortunate than me. I made a difference inside and outside of government and that I was kind and generous and honest. And I want to be famous for my children. I want one of them to cure cancer or win the Nobel Peace Prize or be the first

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woman president. One of my daughters said, "Mom, I don't want to go to Washington and be known as Kellyanne Conway's daughter." And I said, "Well, then cure cancer, and I'll be known as Claudia Conway's mother." That's the way I look at it.

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Trump Follows Obama's Lead In Flexing Executive Muscle

By Carl Hulse

New York Times, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON — When President Obama relied heavily on executive orders to push through policies that had no chance in Congress, Republicans called him a dictator who abused his power and disregarded the Constitution. They even took him to court.

"We have an increasingly lawless presidency where he is actually doing the job of Congress, writing new policies and laws without going through Congress," Representative Paul D. Ryan, then the Budget Committee chairman, said in a 2014 television interview after Mr. Obama made clear in his State of the Union address that he would readily take unilateral action to get his way.

Now President Trump, at the start of his tenure, is relying heavily on executive actions not just to reverse Obama administration initiatives, but to enact new federal policies covering immigration, health care and other areas in ways that could be seen more as the province of the House and Senate. And he is doing that with clear Republican majorities in Congress.

The flurry of administration edicts flowing from the Trump White House puts some top Republicans in the awkward position of welcoming aggressive executive muscle flexing from a president of their own party after castigating Mr. Obama for using the same approach.

Their rationale: Mr. Obama took executive action too far, stretching the intent of legislation to fulfill an ideological agenda.

"We've never been against executive action," said Ashlee Strong, a spokeswoman for Mr. Ryan, now the House speaker. "We're against overreaching, illegal action."

Mr. Trump's eager embrace of the executive order — he signaled clearly during his campaign that he intended to follow his predecessor's lead — allows him to claim immediate progress on his campaign promises rather than waiting for a lengthy legislative process to play out.

Many of his major proposals — building a border wall, hiring more border and immigration officers, creating a new office for victims of crimes committed by immigrants in the country illegally — will presumably require funding by Congress, and that is no certainty in the current political environment.

The question then becomes how Mr. Trump would proceed if Congress balks. House Republicans are currently suing the executive branch — and winning — in a case that argues the Obama administration spent more than $13 billion on health insurance subsidies without necessary congressional approval in a clear breach of the Constitution.

The health care executive order issued by Mr. Trump last week directed federal officials to find ways to minimize the financial burden of the health care law on governments, health care providers and others. Many saw the move as a backdoor attempt by the new White House to undermine the current law of the land while Republicans try to figure out a way to repeal it.

It was the reverse of the type of action Republicans criticized President Obama for — using his executive powers to prop up the health care law without sufficient authority. But there were no loud complaints from Republicans this time, a fact not lost on Democrats.

"Congressional Republicans' hypocritical acquiescence to President Trump's executive orders is an abdication of their responsibility to govern, especially in light of their vocal opposition to even the most restrained use of executive authority by President Obama," said Representative Nancy Pelosi of California, the Democratic leader.

But some Republicans are wary too. Even as they welcome the opportunities opened up by having an ally in the White House, some worry that the continued emphasis on executive actions is just another step in the dilution of legislative power.

"We need to go back to being the legislative branch," said Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Florida Republican opposed to a potential executive order by Mr. Trump that would end a special program allowing younger illegal immigrants to remain in the United States. "We didn't like this when Obama was doing it, so why should we accept it now?"

Other Republicans were hoping the start of a new administration would allow a reset between the executive branch and a legislative branch that has seen its influence steadily erode as lawmakers surrender power and responsibility to the administrative side. Mr. Trump's broad assertion of executive power could make any rebalancing difficult to achieve, though lawmakers say they intend to keep pushing.

"The imperial presidency was not created overnight and it will not be undone overnight," said Senator Mike Lee, Republican of Utah, who is leading an effort called the Article I Project to try to recapture some lost authority for the House and Senate.

Mr. Lee and Ms. Strong of the speaker's office said a good first step in Congress's reasserting itself would be enactment of a bill passed by the House this month requiring congressional approval of major new rules being pushed by federal agencies. If it could clear the Senate, Mr. Trump has said he would sign it in what would represent a major victory for congressional Republicans trying to rein in the regulatory power of the executive branch.

Still, Mr. Trump's early focus on pushing his agenda through executive actions underscores a fundamental truth of presidencies. New occupants of the White House tend not to surrender power accumulated by their predecessors. They tend to build on it.

Official: Trump Wants To Slash EPA Workforce, Budget

By Michael Biesecker

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – The former head of President Donald Trump's transition team at the Environmental Protection Agency said Thursday he expects the new administration to seek significant budget and staff cuts.

Myron Ebell said in an interview with The Associated Press that his specific recommendations to the White House remain confidential. But Ebell, who left the transition team last week, said it was reasonable to expect the president to seek a cut of about $1 billion from the EPA's roughly $8 billion annual budget.

He also said Trump is likely to seek significant reductions to the agency's workforce, currently about 15,000 employees nationwide, with 8,000 of those in Washington. Ebell declined to discuss specific numbers of EPA staff that could be targeted for pink slips. Asked what he would personally like to see, however, Ebell replied that slashing the agency's workforce by half would be a good start.

"President Trump said during the campaign that he would like to abolish the EPA, or 'leave a little bit,'" said Ebell, who has returned to his position as director of the Center for Energy and Environment at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a libertarian think tank in Washington.

"I think the administration is likely to start proposing cuts to the 15,000 staff, because the fact is that a huge amount of the work of the EPA is actually done by state agencies. It's not clear why so many employees are needed at the federal level," he said.

EPA has been roiled by turmoil during its first week under Trump, as members of the transition team issued what it has described as a temporary freeze on all contract approvals and grant awards. Trump's representatives have instituted a media blackout, clapping down on media releases, social media posts and other external communications issued by career staff.

Trump's political appointees have also been scrutinizing reports and data published on the agency's websites for potential removal, especially details of scientific evidence showing that the Earth's climate is warming and man-made carbon emissions are to blame.

Ebell, whose academic credentials are in philosophy and political theory, said Tuesday the purge is necessary because EPA's leaders under President Barack Obama "politicized" global warming and allowed activists within the agency to publish "junk science."

Trump's nominee for EPA administrator, Scott Pruitt, said during his Senate confirmation hearing last week that he disagreed with past statements by the president alleging that global warming is a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese to harm U.S. economic competitiveness. But like Trump, Pruitt has a long history of publicly questioning the validity of climate science.

Earlier this month, NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued a joint statement affirming that 2016 was officially the hottest year in recorded history, breaking prior records set in 2015 and 2014. Studies show the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have decreased in mass, while the world's oceans have risen on average nearly 7 inches in the last century.

Follow AP environmental reporter Biesecker at Twitter.com/mbieseck

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EPA Aims To End Trump's Freeze On Contracts And Grants On Friday

By Timothy Gardner

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Reports On Climate Change Have Disappeared From The State Department Website

By Chelsea Harvey

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

Multiple climate-related reports have disappeared from the State Department's website within the past few days. It's the latest news in a week marked by reports of increasing oversight of federal agencies, including their communication around scientific issues.

Archived versions of the State Department's website as it appeared under the Obama administration indicate that links to climate reports no longer appear on the current web pages for both the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs and the Office of Global Change. Links to pages on other environmental issues, such as marine conservation, remain intact.

Several State Department web pages housing individual Obama-era climate reports have also disappeared, including the 2014 U.S. Climate Action Report to the UN and several reports from the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group, among others. These reports can still be accessed through the archives.

"Administration-specific content that was posted to state.gov during President Obama's tenure was archived," the State Department press office said in a statement emailed to The Washington post. "Content that remains on state.gov includes, but is not limited to, the functions and operations of the Department information; Congressionally-mandated reports, e.g., TIP, HRR, and IRF; and collections of official documents, e.g., legal treaties and air transport agreements. New items created by the Trump Administration will be posted to state.gov."

It's not the first government site to fail to note climate information under the new administration. References to climate change disappeared from the White House website on the day of the inauguration, replaced with information about the Trump administration's energy plan.

This week, the Trump administration also came under fire for placing restrictions on the communications of certain federal agencies, including the EPA and the Agriculture and Interior departments. These included restrictions on social media communications, press releases and responses to media requests.

That said, other federal agencies have continued to share information on climate change as usual. Twitter accounts belonging to both NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have gone on tweeting climate-related content this week. And a Twitter account belonging to Badlands National Park became briefly famous on Tuesday when it released a handful of defiant tweets about climate change.

Those tweets have since disappeared, but the incident has spurred a number of other protest Twitter accounts, which, while not officially affiliated with federal agencies, have gone on to publicize information about human-caused climate change.

"Climate change is real, Trump," tweeted one such account, AltUSNatParkService, on Thursday morning. "You gotta deal with it now, or have the problems it creates be your legacy, for now & future generations."

U.S. Federal Employee 'Gag Orders' May Be Illegal, Lawmakers Warn Trump

By Valerie Volcovici

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Democrats On Capitol Hill Ask White House Not To Gag Federal Employees

By Tom Hamburger And Amy Goldstein

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

An Inauguration Day memo instructing employees of the Department of Health and Human Services not to communicate about regulatory policy with members of Congress has triggered fresh accusations that the Trump administration is trying to censor federal employees.

Representatives Elijah E. Cummings (D-Md.) and Frank Pallone Jr. (D-N.J.) wrote the White House on Thursday asking President Trump to make it clear that federal employees have an unrestricted ability to communicate with lawmakers.

They said the HHS memo, along with others sent in recent days by other agencies, "appear to violate multiple federal laws," including one that protects federal whistleblowers.

"We request that the President issue an official statement making clear to all federal employees that they have the right to communicate with members of Congress and that he and his Administration will not silence or retaliate against whistleblowers," the two Democrats wrote in a letter to White House Counsel Donald McGahn II.

The White House did not respond to requests for comment Thursday. An HHS spokesperson said a clarification of the memo had been distributed, telling agency employees that the original directive should not be interpreted "in any way that would preclude or in any way interfere with HHS staff addressing their concerns to their elected representatives in person or in writing."

The Interior Department ordered a shutdown of all its Twitter accounts after the National Park Service retweeted photos showing a substantially smaller crowd at Trump's swearing-in last Friday than had attended former president Barack Obama's inauguration in 2009. Trump expressed anger about the tweets in a phone call the next day to the Park Service's acting director. The department's Twitter

account was subsequently restored, but only after the Park Service deleted the offending tweets.

In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency and Agriculture Department issued formal policies limiting what staff should convey to the public about their work. The latter agency has since reversed that.

The HHS memo was particularly galling to Cummings and Pallone, according to their aides, because they learned about it from HHS staffers who balked at providing information requested by their committees. The congressmen's offices said employees at the Food and Drug Administration, which is part of HHS, cited the directive when they canceled meetings with congressional staff

The memo appears to have been written as part of a more traditional presidential transition effort to freeze rulemaking by federal agencies until the new administration's officials have a chance to review new rules.

However, the HHS memo from Acting Secretary Norris Cochran went further than the typical transition instruction and the restrictions issued by other federal agencies. It told employees that "no correspondence to public officials (e.g. Members of Congress, Governors) or containing interpretations or statements of Department regulations or policy, unless specifically authorized by me or my designee, shall be sent between now and February 3, during which time you will have the opportunity to brief President Trump's appointees and designees on any such correspondence which might be issued."

Cummings and Pallone complained that the memo violated the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act "because they do not include a mandatory statement that employee communications with Congress and Inspectors General are protected." The act, passed by Congress unanimously in 2012, prohibits agencies from implementing or enforcing "any nondisclosure policy, form, or agreement" that does not include the mandatory statement.

In their letter, the two lawmakers also cited an apparent violations of other laws, including a 1912 statute designed to protect the rights of federal employees to freely "furnish information to either House of Congress, or to a committee or Member."

The memos from HHS and other agencies, they said, create "the impression that the Trump Administration intends to muzzle whistleblowers."

At the White House this week, press secretary Sean Spicer said that the administration had not asked any agency to impose new restrictions on communications.

It's 'Ridiculous' To Say The Defense Department Is Trolling Trump On Twitter, Pentagon Says

By Dan Lamothe

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

The suggestion that the Defense Department has posted social media messages as a form of protest to Trump is "ridiculous," a Pentagon spokesman said Thursday.

Navy Capt. Jeff Davis told reporters that recent messages posted on the Defense Department Twitter page are nothing out of the ordinary, and part of steady communication with the general public, active-duty troops and veterans. The question came after the Defense Department tweeted a story Wednesday about a former Iraqi refugee who enlisted in the Marine Corps after reports emerged that Trump was considering an executive order seeking to halt refugee resettlement in the United States.

The tweet linked to a Defense Department news release that shared the story of Cpl. Ali J. Mohammed, who grew up in Baghdad, and moved to the United States at 16 years old after his family received numerous threats for supporting U.S. policies. He joined the Marines in November 2014.

"If you look at this, this isn't some unique thing," Davis said. "If you look at this, we are tweeting from the Department of Defense account a dozen or more times a day."

The Defense Department has released stories previously about Iraqis who joined the U.S. military. In one example, the Marine Corps published a story Sept. 30 about a Marine, Pfc. Amanda Issa, whose family fled the city of Mosul in 2011 and eventually settled in Michigan.

The Defense Department tweet Wednesday drew widespread attention on social media:

The attention followed another Defense Department tweet Monday that warned followers that social media can provide hints on a person's mental health.

Some followers questioned whether that was posted in response to Trump, who tweets often.

The tweet included a link to a Defense Department page focused on preventing suicide, a longterm problem among active-duty service members and veterans.

Davis said Thursday that the tweet about mental health was "simply about teaching people the warning signs about suicide, and that was misinterpreted and taken and unfortunately… preyed upon by the trolls of the Internet."

"It's really unfortunate, because it's a serious message," Davis said.

The tweets were sent as the Trump administration restricted the authorization for other agencies to release information to the public. They also came as other agencies, such as Badlands National Park, tweeted messages about climate change that were construed by some followers as a response to Trump questioning its existence. The National Parks Service also retweeted images that showed the size of of Trump's inauguration day in an unflattering light, prompting a temporary shutdown of social media accounts at the Department of Interior.

Kasich On Trump: 'Give Him A Chance'

By Deirdre Shesgreen

USA Today, January 26, 2017

Ohio Gov. John Kasich likes being in the national spotlight, but he's not so keen on talking about President Trump.

That's not an easy line to walk, as Kasich discovered on Wednesday when he made his second trip to Washington in less than a week. At an event on America's relationship with the Netherlands, Kasich was peppered with questions about Trump.

The GOP governor dodged and weaved, perhaps trying to avoid a firefight with the new White House occupant despite his repeated feuds with Trump during the 2016 campaign.

How can Trump's Defense secretary convince Trump that NATO is vital to U.S. interests and America's role in the world?

"I don't have a clue," Kasich offered, before delving into a wonkish discussion of the need for such international institutions to evolve and modernize.

What does he think of Trump's first few days in office?

"It's too early," he said. "Give him a chance."

What does he think of the president's move to crack down on immigration and restrict refugees coming to the U.S.?

"I don't know what the plans are. I haven't seen them," he said. "I think it makes good sense for us to review our immigration policy."

Kasich's reason for coming to Washington was a bit odd. He was a guest panelist at an event hosted by the Embassy of the Netherlands, focused on that small European country's relationship the U.S. in the wake of Trump's election.

Other panelists and the moderator talked about despondency and despair in Europe over Trump's victory, particularly because the GOP president has been so dismissive of NATO and so enamored of Russia.

Kasich was careful not to get drawn into too many specifics, generally lamenting America's declining global leadership but not mentioning Trump.

"I happen to believe that we as Americans have an obligation to lead the world," he said at one point.

Asked why he had decided to participate in this event, which comes as Ohio is preparing to release its annual budget, Kasich said it was important for him to remain engaged in global affairs.

"First of all, we have a great relationship with the Netherlands," Kasich said, citing Ohio's trade with that country among other things.

Besides, he added, "I have a long history of being involved in international affairs, I see no reason to not continue to be able to develop that. I think it helps Ohio."

Of course, it also helps Kasich — keeping the governor's name in the news and highlighting his foreign policy credentials if he decides to make another presidential run in 2020.

Trump Versus California: The Feud Turns From Rhetorical To Real

By Cathleen Decker, Contact Reporter

Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2017

Between his executive orders on immigration and the investigation he wants into voter fraud, President Trump had a clear target on Wednesday: California.

The state was one of two singled out as a focus of the vote fraud investigation stemming from Trump's belief that he lost the popular vote due to "illegals" taking part in November's election.

California also was the unnamed center of Trump's announcement of plans to tighten immigration rules and punish jurisdictions that offer sanctuary to those without proper papers— penalties that in California could rise to millions or billions of dollars.

The new president's moves came one day after Gov. Jerry Brown used his State of the State speech to challenge Trump's presidency and assert that California intended to go its own way.

Three business days into Trump's presidency, the battle lines are already clear.

California became accustomed in the Obama era to fond relations with a president who favored golf in the Palm Springs area and fundraisers in the tony reaches of Southern California and the Bay Area.

Although California, a wealthy state, has long sent more money to Washington in taxes than it receives back, its accounts swelled with federal money during the Obama administration. All told about $105 billion in federal funds are included in the state government's 2017-18 budget, according to the state Department of Finance.

Now California faces a president who doesn't seem terribly fond of the place and has the power to make it suffer.

"He could have a tremendous impact — probably no state is as much at risk as California," said Rep. Adam B. Schiff, the Burbank Democrat, speaking of the whole range of federal dollars that could be stripped from California if Trump enacts his preferred policies.

"This is a president who is not above being very punitive for perceived slights. And so you could easily foresee him trying to reward states that are with him and punish states that weren't."

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Indeed, that was the undercurrent on Wednesday when White House spokesman Sean Spicer talked to reporters about a voting fraud investigation that Trump had announced on Twitter earlier in the day.

It was the latest in a controversy that broke out Monday night when Trump told congressional leaders that he had lost the popular vote because 3 million to 5 million "illegals" had voted.

"I will be asking for a major investigation into VOTER FRAUD, including those registered to vote in two states, those who are illegal and even, those registered to vote who are dead (and many for a long time)," Trump tweeted Wednesday.

Spicer alluded to California after a reporter pointed out that the president's lawyers, in a legal filing in a case involving requested recounts in the upper Midwest, said the election had not been tainted by fraud.

"There's a lot of states that we didn't compete in where that's not necessarily the case," Spicer said. "You look at California and New York…. A lot of these issues could have occurred in bigger states; that's where I think we are going to look."

What did those two states have in common? They were the two biggest states to side with Hillary Clinton. Florida and Texas, both of which cast more ballots than New York, went unmentioned. So did Pennsylvania, where before the election Trump preemptively blamed an anticipated loss on voter fraud in Philadelphia, which has a sizable African American population. All three states went to Trump.

Spicer's rationale didn't make much sense: He suggested that the administration couldn't rule out fraud in California and New York because Trump hadn't competed there before his landslide defeats in both places. But Clinton also spent little time campaigning in California and New York for the same reason: They were guaranteed to go Democratic.

There was an even bigger logic problem: Anyone seeking to steal the election would have done so in the handful of states that determined the outcome, not in two where the results were preordained.

A more believable rationale rested on Trump's anger at losing the popular vote: The only way he can diminish Clinton's victory on that score is to cast doubt on the results in the big states she won.

California elections officials say that they have looked for fraud and found nothing like the widespread problem Trump believes occurred.

"President Trump is dangerously attacking the legitimacy of free and fair elections and taking a jackhammer to the foundation of our democracy," Secretary of State Alex Padilla said in a statement. "They are corrosive lies without any evidence."

The potential fallout from any investigation into voting may be dwarfed, however, by the impact of Trump's immigration rules, which the president announced Wednesday.

Trump promised to expand the number of immigrants targeted for deportation; while he has said his priority will be criminals, his plan includes those who have been charged but not convicted.

His orders restored a program under which state and local officials must cooperate with the federal government on immigration matters and threatened to withhold federal funds from places that "willfully refuse to comply."

By that, the plan means "sanctuary" locations, which could include Los Angeles, San Francisco and dozens of other cities in California, depending on how broadly the administration chooses to define the term. By some definitions, the entire state counts as a sanctuary zone.

What the punishment would be is unclear. Los Angeles is to receive about $500 million this fiscal year from the federal government. It is not known whether only security-related funds would be cut if the city declined to cooperate; the president's executive order leaves open the possibility that all federal money could vanish.

In Sacramento, officials aren't expecting that all of the federal government's $105 billion would be pulled, but any substantial drop would pose a problem. The order has law enforcement complications, too: Agencies in many California areas have refused to work with immigration officials because it inhibits their ability to get helpful information from immigrant communities.

To state officials, the feuding between Trump and California boils down to this: The state could be under investigation for election failures for which there is no evidence, and which are denied by Democratic and Republican election officials. And the state may be punished for how it chose to respond to the federal government's decades-long inability to secure the border.

Trump, in remarks in which he also announced the planned construction of a wall on the Mexican border, said that his efforts would "save thousands of lives, millions of jobs and billions and billions of dollars."

"When it comes to public safety, there is no place for politics," he added.

But it was certainly in the air.

TransCanada Re-submits Application For Keystone XL Pipeline

By Komal Khettry

Reuters, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Keystone XL Pipeline: A New Opening, But What Lies Ahead?

By Clifford Krauss

New York Times, January 26, 2017

In his first days in office, President Trump reversed the government's position on a highly contentious energy project, reviving the Keystone XL, a pipeline that would link oil producers in Canada and North Dakota with refiners and export terminals on the Gulf Coast.

The pipeline has long been at the center of a struggle pitting environmentalists against advocates of energy independence and economic growth. President Barack Obama rejected the project in late 2015, saying it would be antithetical to the United States' leadership in curbing reliance on carbon fuels.

But even with an opening for the pipeline to go forward, the energy markets are starkly different from what they were eight years ago, when the Obama administration began considering the pipeline.

When the project was conceived, the United States was struggling to lift domestic oil supplies and push down prices. The Keystone XL project was meant to supplement existing pipelines and increase Canada's export potential. Since then, production has rebounded in the United States, and international oil markets are dealing with oversupply. Gasoline at the pump is cheap.

As has been the case throughout the project's history, however, economic forces alone will not determine its prospects. Political, commercial, environmental and even diplomatic factors will also play a role.

The Keystone XL was originally planned to open in 2012. It was designed to send up to 830,000 barrels a day of Canadian and North Dakota crude to Steele City, Neb., where it would connect with an existing network to deliver the crude to refineries on the Gulf of Mexico. With domestic supplies already abundant, most of the refined oil would probably be sent on to other countries. It might also make some American oil available for export.

The project would yield thousands of construction jobs — accounting for the support of several powerful unions — and a demand for equipment, lodging and food. But it would produce few permanent jobs and would add only modestly to the United States' energy security.

The pipeline is a major symbol in the fight over how to control climate change. Environmentalists say it could leak and damage local water supplies, and they contend that the project would expand the extraction of oil sands, a heavy oil that has a relatively high carbon footprint because it requires extensive, energy-intensive processing and refining.

Proponents argue that pipelines offer safer transport than trains or trucks, and that the carbon intensity of oil sands products is similar to several grades of crude currently refined in the United States, including oil extracted in California.

Energy experts say the pipeline would help Canada, a close ally, and oil companies that have large investments in the Canadian oil sands fields. Investments have been slowing because of low global prices and limited links to energy-thirsty consumers in Asia.

Globally, more Canadian supplies would be superfluous. In 2016, liquid fuel inventories expanded around the world for the third year in a row. The pace of inventory expansion is expected to decline this year now that Saudi Arabia and other members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries are cutting production. But the United States Department of Energy projects that oil prices will remain below $60 a barrel through the end of 2018, a far cry from the prices of $100 to $140 a barrel when the Keystone XL was first proposed.

And the project puts Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada in a tricky position. He supports the pipeline and the oil sands, citing their economic importance to Canada. But any increase in oil sands production because of Keystone XL could undermine the country's plans for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, a key item in Mr. Trudeau's political program.

Record levels of investment are being sunk back into several shale fields in Texas, while a number of giant offshore projects in the Gulf of Mexico that were delayed by the 2010 BP oil spill are now finally coming to fruition. New oil discoveries in Texas and Alaska assure plentiful domestic supplies for years to come, enough to export increasing amounts.

In the final three months of 2016, oil companies in the United States increased their output by 200,000 barrels, to 8.9 million barrels a day. As decommissioned rigs have returned to the fields in recent weeks, Wall Street analysts have projected a daily output of 9.7 million barrels by the end of the year. That will be roughly equal to national production levels before the industry swooned with the collapse of oil prices a little more than two years ago.

Proponents of the pipeline have long argued that Canada's heavy oil is a perfect fit for Gulf of Mexico refineries that were designed to process Venezuela's and Mexico's heavy oil. But the refineries have now been partially refitted to process the lighter crude pouring out of the newly exploited shale fields.

Advocates have also argued that dependence on Canada for energy is far more secure than reliance on countries like Venezuela and Saudi Arabia.

But in recent years, other friendly countries in the Western Hemisphere have become major producers, including Brazil and Colombia. The government in Argentina is opening up a giant shale field in Patagonia to Western investment, and Exxon Mobil and Hess are finding large new reserves off the coast of Guyana. And Mexico, after years of

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falling production, is putting in place a new energy policy that is attracting large investments by the biggest global oil companies, including Exxon Mobil and Chevron.

The pipeline still has a long way to go before it can be built. TransCanada, the Canadian pipeline company, must reapply for permits, and the State Department needs to study the application and approve it.

President Trump wants to renegotiate the pipeline deal on better terms for the United States — including the possibility of requiring American-made pipes — and TransCanada's response remains uncertain. Any deal, however, will surely be challenged in the courts and by vigorous local civil disobedience.

U.S. New Home Sales Drop Sharply In December

Last month's fall of 10.4% from November was the steepest since March 2015

By Laura Kusisto And Ben Leubsdorf

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Share Of U.S. Workers In Unions Falls To Lowest Level On Record

Marks return to downward trend for organized labor after membership figures had stabilized

By Eric Morath And Kris Maher

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Trump's Hiring Freeze Could Hurt His Most Loyal Supporters

By Vera Bergengruen

McClatchy, January 26, 2017

President Donald Trump's temporary hiring freeze on federal jobs is disproportionately affecting a group of his most loyal supporters: veterans, who receive preference in federal hiring. Some already have had job interviews canceled or postponed, advocacy groups say.

The hiring freeze also applies to the Department of Veterans Affairs, something that deeply troubles veterans groups and lawmakers, who say the freeze complicates the provision of veterans services by an agency that is chronically understaffed.

Show me a federal agency or office anywhere in this country that doesn't have vets working there.

Will Fischer, Union Veterans Council

"Our nation's veterans should not be made to sacrifice any more than they already have while you review federal hiring," a group of Democratic lawmakers, led by Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., and Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn., wrote in a letter to Trump, urging him to exempt veterans from the freeze, that had 53 signatures as of Thursday morning.

"This freeze raises serious concerns about the president's commitment to veterans and improving the VA," said Paul Rieckhoff, an Iraq War veteran who's the head of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. "Over the past day, countless IAVA members have contacted us concerned about the future of their health care. Job seekers waiting to hear about a hiring determination just had their hope dashed."

Some veterans took to Twitter this week, tweeting Trump stories of canceled job interviews for frozen positions and urging him to reconsider the order, some pointing out they had voted for him.

Trump's presidential memorandum, issued Monday, ordered "a freeze on the hiring of federal civilian employees to be applied across the board in the executive branch" for 90 days, except for positions in the military or otherwise affecting national security and public safety.

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said the president wanted to stop "money getting wasted in Washington on a job that is duplicative."

"I think what the president is showing through the hiring freeze, first and foremost, is that we've got to respect the American taxpayer," he said Monday.

Patients, doctors and caregivers across the VA are now worried about the impact of the hiring freeze at this most critical time in the agency's history.

Paul Rieckhoff, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

Nearly 3,000 civilian Defense Department positions that are currently listed in federal employment sites, along with almost 2,300 VA posts, cannot be filled until the freeze is lifted.

Some veterans say Trump, like many Americans who cheered his federal freeze, thinks of all federal workers as well-paid bureaucrats in Washington offices.

"The simple reality is that Donald Trump talked a lot about vets and jobs when he was campaigning for president, and this federal hiring freeze is denying vets what they need more than anything after coming home and getting out of the service – not another standing ovation at a football game, but a good job, a good career," said Will Fischer, executive director of the Union Veterans Council at the AFL-CIO and a Purple Heart recipient who served in Iraq as a Marine.

Fischer pointed out that more than 90 percent of veterans with federal jobs work outside the Washington metro area. "You're talking about the largest employer of veterans in the world, but they only think of Washington when they say 'federal employees,' " he said.

The Veterans Affairs Department is the second-largest agency in the government, with nearly 370,000 employees and an annual budget of nearly $167 billion

The national commander of the American Legion, Charles E. Schmidt, said the hiring freeze was particularly hard on veterans with disabilities. About 15 percent of veterans working at the VA and nearly 18 percent of veterans at the Defense Department have disabilities.

In a statement, Schmidt urged private companies to step up their efforts to hire vets with disabilities, to make up for the hiring freeze.

President Barack Obama made it easier for veterans to get federal jobs with a 2009 order known as the Veterans Employment Initiative. More than 623,000 veterans depend on federal paychecks, according to the most recent report from the Office of Personnel Management.

Spicer defended the hiring freeze earlier this week, calling it a pause to allow time for new leadership at the VA to assess the situation.

"Hiring more people isn't the answer," he said. "Right now, the system is broken."

The VA has 41,500 vacancies for doctors, nurses and other medical professionals across its sprawling health care system, according to a 2015 report.

Acting VA Secretary Robert Snyder told McClatchy in an email that the agency will exempt from the hiring freeze "anyone it deems necessary for public safety, including frontline caregivers."

The VA provides care for more than 9 million veterans through 1,700 facilities it operates across the country. The quality of that service has been questioned since 2014, when the VA acknowledged that 23 veterans had died while they were waiting for appointments.

EDITORS: STORY CAN END HERE

Peter Kauffmann, senior adviser to VoteVets, a liberal veterans advocacy group, called the inclusion of the VA in the hiring freeze "the ultimate insult."

"If his executive order leads to preventable deaths, that will be on Donald Trump's hands, and we will hold him personally accountable," he said.

During his presidential campaign, Trump frequently promised to overhaul the VA, calling it "the most corrupt" and "probably the most incompetently run agency." It remains to be seen what his administration will do differently when it comes to solving the agency's struggles to provide services to veterans.

"You can't hire your way out of it and you can't fire your way out of it," said Jonah Czerwinski, who served as a senior adviser in the department from 2009 to 2013.

Trump has proposed a 10-point plan to overhaul the agency and named David Shulkin to be VA secretary. Shulkin is a rarity in the Trump administration – someone who also served in the Obama administration, where he was the VA's undersecretary of health. Shulkin's Senate confirmation hearing is set for Feb. 1.

Prosecutors Try New Tack In Investigating Police Shootings

Moves on how to handle use-of-force cases follow controversies over killings of black men

By Scott Calvert

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Obama Frees Him — And He Is Killed Execution-Style

USA Today, January 26, 2017

A former gang member saw his prison sentence commuted by President Obama in November — only to be killed almost exactly two months later.

Demarlon Thomas, 31, was transitioning out of the federal prison system in a Saginaw, Mich., halfway house after having his sentence commuted Nov. 22.

Two masked gunmen brandishing assault-style weapons sought out and killed Thomas, a former member of Saginaw's Sunny Side Gang, at that halfway house Monday night, reports MLive. "They were looking for this person," a Michigan State Police officer says, describing the shooting as execution-style.

One gunman shot Thomas numerous times, while the other held 23 others at gunpoint; ultimately, no one else was injured.

"I think it was connected one way or another to the gang he was from or a rival gang," the officer tells Michigan Radio. The suspects are still at large.

Thomas had been sentenced to 19 years in prison in 2008 for distributing cocaine after a federal investigation that authorities thought had put an end to the Sunny Side Gang.

Thanks to Obama commuting his sentence, he had been scheduled to go free in March, about eight years earlier than his original release date.

"He was just happy to ... have a second chance at life," a friend of Thomas tells MLive.

(This was far from the most high-profile sentence commuted by Obama.)

– Jan Jordan

This story originally appeared on Newser:

Trump's Limo Sports D.C.'s Protest License Plate: 'Taxation Without Representation'

By Aaron C. Davis And David Nakamura

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

President Trump is threatening to take away federal funding from the nation's capital for harboring illegal immigrants and has promised to sign a bill permanently banning the heavily Democratic city from subsidizing abortions for low-income residents.

But perhaps Trump shares one interest with his newly adopted city of Washington, D.C.

When the president took one of his first excursions from the White House on Thursday, Trump's armored limousine pulled up to a Philadelphia hotel sporting the District's controversial "Taxation without Representation" license plates.

The slogan, first added to D.C. license plates 16 years ago, is probably the most visible sign of the fight of District residents to gain equal footing with Americans in the 50 states.

The District has a population of more than 672,000 — larger than that of Vermont or Wyoming — and its residents pay more in federal taxes than do those in 22 states. But D.C. residents have no voting representation in Congress and federal lawmakers on Capitol Hill retain ultimate authority over the District, able to overturn city laws or even to nullify results of ballot measures passed by local voters.

With each administration, residents watch to see if the occupant of the White House chooses the protest license plates, hoping they might gain a powerful ally in their quest for statehood.

They were first placed on the presidential limo, nicknamed "the beast," by Democratic President Bill Clinton near the end of his term. Republican George W. Bush removed them. Despite pledging to push for D.C. voting rights, Obama declined to use the plates during his first term. The White House agreed only after he had been re-elected and was petitioned by local leaders.

When Obama installed the plates in 2013, the White House said that after four years in D.C., the president sympathized with the District's cause for statehood and had seen "first-hand how patently unfair it is for working families in D.C. to work hard, raise children and pay taxes, without having a vote in Congress."

It remains entirely unclear if Trump assigns the same meaning to the plates.

In an interview with The Washington Post editorial board last March, Trump, said he had "no position" on the issue of D.C. statehood.

"I think statehood is a tough thing for D.C. I think it's a tough thing. I don't have a position on it yet. I would form a position. But I think statehood is a tough thing for D.C.," the then-candidate said. "I think it's just something that I don't think I'd be inclined to do. I'd like to study it. It's not a question really … I don't see statehood for D.C."

That's also the position of Republican leaders in Congress.

Democrats outnumber Republicans in the District by a margin of more than 2 to 1. That means that if it became a state, the District would probably elect two Democratic senators and a Democratic member of the House, improving odds for Democratic control of both chambers.

District voters have also given Trump little incentive for any favors. Just 4 percent of voters chose him over Demcoratic nominee Hillary Clinton last November. It was among the worst showings nationally forTrump, and the worst showing ever for a Republican since residents were allowed to begin voting for president in the 1960s.

On the same ballot, however, more than seven in 10 D.C. voters backed a referendum to create a new state for D.C. residents. The plan calls for splitting residential areas of the capital into the 51st state and leaving a smaller, downtown district that contains government buildings and monuments as a federal enclave.

Still, it was unclear if Obama was even aware of the effort.

A couple weeks before the November election, a video posted by the Kennedy Center of comedian Bill Murray touring the Oval Office with Obama showed Murray asking if the president has "a good license plate."

Obama turn to an aide, who is off-camera, and asked, "That's a good question actually. Does the 'beast' have a license plate? What does it say? Is it top secret? Just a number?"

D.C. Council members last year introduced a bill to alter the plate to drive home their political message. They wanted to add a verb: "End Taxation Without Representation."

Survey: DC Women's March Drew Many First-time Protesters

By Nancy Benac

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – About a third of the people who turned out for the Women's March on Washington were first-time protesters, an unusually high share of newcomers for a demonstration, according to a survey of march participants.

University of Maryland Professor Dana Fisher said Thursday the random survey of 527 participants in the District of Columbia march on the day after President Donald Trump's inauguration also found that about 56 percent hadn't been part of a demonstration in the past five years, including the first-timers.

By contrast, 38 percent of demonstrators at the People's Climate March in New York in 2014 hadn't demonstrated in the past 5 years, said Fisher, who studies large-scale protests. There was no comparable figure for first-time protesters.

The survey found that those who turned out to march in Washington had turned out to vote, too – and not for Trump.

Ninety percent of those surveyed reported they had voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton, 2 percent said they voted for a third party and 6 percent didn't answer. Less than 1 percent said they voted for Trump.

"I think the reason we had so many first-timers was that people felt like what was going to come with the Trump administration was so much in contrast to the issues that are important to them and the positions that are important to them that they felt they had to do something," Fisher said.

A large range of issues drew people to the march. Asked what motivated them to participate, 61 percent said women's rights. About a third mentioned the environment, racial justice, LGBTQ issues and reproductive rights. About a fourth mentioned social welfare and immigration.

Research teams spread out throughout the demonstration area to survey a random selection of participants. Additional survey results will be released later.

City officials in Washington estimated the march drew more than 500,000 people.

Follow Nancy Benac on Twitter at http://twitter.com/nbenac

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Birthplace Of The CIA And American Spycraft Just Made The National Register Of Historic Places

By Steve Hendrix

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

For a few former spies, it was one last mission: protecting the birthplace of the country's modern intelligence apparatus from being bulldozed by Washington's pell-mell development. This month, they pulled it off when a small cluster of Foggy Bottom buildings, where early agents invented the pencil pistol and other tricks to bedevil Hitler, was listed for the first time on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Observatory Hill site not far from the Kennedy Center was the wartime headquarters of the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency, and had been slated for redevelopment as part of a State Department expansion.

While planners had promised a measure of protection for the place where "Wild Bill" Donovan led a swashbuckling band of spies, former agents were shocked to learn that it enjoyed no formal preservation status.

"I just assumed a place of that stature would automatically be protected," said former OSS and CIA agent Hugh Montgomery, 93. Sent behind the German lines by his handlers at the beginning of his 63-year intelligence career, the nonagenarian spy came out of retirement to push for the historic listing, writing letters to Capitol Hill and sitting through meetings.

"It's finally happening," Montgomery said.

OSS partisans said it was timely victory when they learned this week that the long process had landed the old HQ on the National Park Service's latest list of historic properties. The intelligence community that draws its pedigree straight back to the little Beaux Arts campus, has been under fire from incoming President Donald Trump for its analysis that Russia had tampered in the recent election.

"At a time when the intelligence community finds itself embroiled in controversy, it's important to remember its roots in World War II when the world faced the greatest threat it has ever known in the form of Nazi Germany," said Charles Pinke, the son of a former agent and president of the OSS Society, an alumni group. "Their descendants today are carrying on the OSS legacy by fighting terrorism around the word."

It could be that the understated compound overlooking the Potomac, the one-time site of the Heurich Brewery, was too clandestine for its own good. Clearly visible to drivers and concert goers, even many neighborhood residents and local preservationists were unaware its history as the place where modern American spycraft was first honed.

Donovan, whose office in room No. 109 is preserved as a memorial, built a fast-growing complex of cryptographers, analysts and spy handlers. Montgomery said his own secret orders were often simply signed "109." German-born actress Marlene Dietrich came for briefings at the site before her morale-building tours of combat units. Julia Child was a file clerk at the office before she became an overseas operative.

After the war, the agency pivoted to fighting the Cold War and then morphing into the first headquarters of the CIA. Later spy chiefs Allen Dulles and Richard Helms both worked at the Observatory Hill compound.

When the federal government announced plans to remake the whole area for use as State Department offices, intelligence alumni and preservationists went into action. Nothing short of formal listing on the register would offer enough protection, even though officials said the were committed to keeping the appearance of the main spy buildings intact.

"This is a very important place," Mina Wright, the General Services Administration's director of planning and design, said in 2014. "We are totally dedicated to protecting the sense of history here, which will depend on the successful integration of the old and the new."

The GSA did not immediately provide a response to the site's listing on the National Register. Pink said the GSA and State Department were supportive of their efforts. He and his band of his band of aging spooks said they feel the HQ is now safe. Mostly.

"I guess now it's protected from anything except an earthquake," Montgomery said.

Verizon Exploring Combination With Cable Firm Charter Communications

Verizon CEO has approached officials close to Charter, sources say

By Shalini Ramachandran, Ryan Knutson And Dana Mattioli

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

American University Names New President: Obama Cabinet Member Sylvia Mathews Burwell

By Nick Anderson

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

American University announced Thursday that a former top Obama administration official, Sylvia Mathews Burwell, will become its 15th president and the first woman to lead the school in the nation's capital.

Burwell, 51, was director of the Office of Management and Budget under President Barack Obama in 2013-2014 and then secretary of health and human services until his term ended last week. Her Cabinet post put Burwell on the front lines of overseeing the implementation of Obama's signature health care law. She will take over at AU on June 1, succeeding retiring university President Cornelius M. "Neil" Kerwin.

"My family and I are honored and excited to become a part of this vibrant AU community," Burwell said in a statement. "American University's distinctive mix of academic strengths, its influential scholars, engaged students, successful alumni and extraordinary location are great assets."

Burwell's jump to academia echoes in some ways a move that one of her government predecessors made 16 years ago. Donna Shalala, secretary of health and human services under President Bill Clinton, was named president of the University of Miami in 2001 and led that school for 14 years.

But Shalala had extensive academic credentials before her time at HHS, including a doctorate and stints as a tenured professor and then leader of a public college in New York and of the public flagship University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Burwell's background is much different. She earned a bachelor's degree in government from Harvard University and then, as a Rhodes Scholar, a bachelor's in philosophy, politics and economics from the University of Oxford.

But she does not have a master's degree or doctorate and has never been a professor or provost. AU, a private institution with 13,000 students and a main campus on Massachusetts Avenue N.W., will be the first college or university that she leads.

Burwell has other credentials of immense value for a university that aspires to excellence in public and international affairs: deep experience working for two Democratic presidents in Washington and two major national philanthropies. She had various posts in the Clinton administration and was president of global development programs for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and was president of the Walmart Foundation. Those connections should help her in fund-raising and in growing AU's national profile.

Crucially, her fans are bipartisan.

Unlike many Obama administration officials, who had testy relations with Capitol Hill, Burwell made a point of cultivating ties with Republicans who had jurisdiction over her department. During hearings this month for her designated successor at HHS, Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga.), lawmakers made a point of praising Burwell.

Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) told the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee that "one of the best votes I cast four years ago for Cabinet members was a vote for Sylvia Burwell."

Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), chairman of the committee, who was once president of the University of Tennessee, told The Washington Post in a statement: "Sylvia Burwell will make an excellent president of American University — she listens well, she has a strong sense of public purpose, and she is gifted academically."

Burwell, originally from Hinton, W.Va, often refers to her small-town roots. She joked in one interview that she and former agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack were one of the two "rural" members of the Cabinet. She traveled back to West Virginia regularly, saying those experiences helped inform her approach to addressing the nation's opioid crisis.

Former senator Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), now on the faculty of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, said Burwell has a "compelling personal narrative" and predicted she will excel at AU.

"She knows the power of what a university means in a person's life and in the life of the community and in the country," Mikulski said. "She brings savvy and know-how. … She really has the right stuff."

Founded in 1893, AU is affiliated with the United Methodist Church. It is known as a center of political activism and has schools of law, business, public affairs and international service, among other fields. The university has grown more selective in recent years, drawing applicants interested in studying in a city with an increasingly vibrant urban culture and a huge network of federal, international and nonprofit agencies.

The admission rate for the class that entered AU in 2016 was 26 percent, down from 35 percent the year before. As recently as 2009, the rate was 53 percent. The school ranks 74th on the U.S. News and World Report list of national universities, tied with Clark University, Texas A&M University, Virginia Tech and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

The incumbent president at AU, Kerwin, has led the school since 2005. He announced his retirement last March. Under Kerwin, the university launched major renovations and expansions of its campus, and its endowment stood at about $600 million in 2015.

Burwell said in a telephone interview that she looks forward to building on Kerwin's record. "The whole organization is ready to take the next steps forward," she said. "It is a place that embraces innovation and change."

AU is the second university in the District of Columbia this year to name a new president. Thomas LeBlanc, provost of the University of Miami, will become George Washington University's president in July.

Juliet Eilperin contributed to this report.

Trump Compared A Navy Man's Crime To Clinton's Email Scandal. Now That Sailor Wants A Pardon.

By Lindsey Bever

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

While on the campaign trail, President Trump talked about a Navy man who was sentenced to federal prison for taking photographs inside a nuclear attack submarine.

Trump was comparing the sailor's crime to Hillary Clinton's email scandal, arguing that others have been prosecuted for doing "nothing by comparison to what she's done."

"They took the kid who wanted some pictures of the submarine," Trump said in one of his campaign speeches, The Washington Post reported at the time. "That's an old submarine; they've got plenty of pictures, if the enemy wants them, they've got plenty of them. He wanted to take a couple of pictures. They put him in jail for a year."

Now that enlisted sailor, 30-year-old Kristian Saucier, is asking the president to commute his prison sentence and pardon him of his crime. His attorneys say they want to show that not only is it a double standard that Americans such as Saucier are prosecuted when Clinton was not, but also that Saucier was used as an example during a time when the U.S. government was cracking down on people mishandling classified information — to show that it does take such cases seriously.

"I just see such a clear injustice," his mother, Kathleen Saucier, told The Washington Post. "It breaks my heart because I know he's not the only one who feels that they've been thrown away by their country.

"If anything comes out of this — we're going to raise awareness about double standards."

"I never said he wasn't guilty," she added, "but what I'm saying is, how can this be justice?"

Jeffrey Addicott, Saucier's attorney, who recently filed petitions for Saucier's clemency as well as a pardon under the Obama administration, called the handling of Saucier's misconduct case a "gross miscarriage of justice."

"Justice means you get what you deserve; he didn't get what he deserved," said Addicott, director of the Center for Terrorism Law at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio. He is handling the case pro bono.

Addicott added that other sailors who took photos about the same time on the same submarine were not held to the same standard as Saucier.

"None were discharged; none were jailed. So why was Kristian? There's only one reason," Addicott said, referring to Clinton's email controversy.

A representative for the White House said she was looking into the pardon petition.

Saucier, who was a machinist's mate aboard the USS Alexandria, snapped six photos on his cellphone in 2009, showing his work areas on the submarine, according to court records.

His attorneys had said in a filing that he did it "out of the misguided desire to keep these pictures in order to one day show his family and future children what he did while he was in the Navy."

But the Justice Department said Saucier, who had secret clearance, revealed "major technical components of the submarine's propulsion system." In 2012, someone found Saucier's cellphone — with the photos still on it — at a waste transfer station, according to the Justice Department.

After Saucier was questioned by federal agents, prosecutors said, he destroyed his laptop.

In 2015, Saucier was indicted on a charge of unauthorized retention of defense information, which carries a maximum 10-year prison sentence, and was given an "other-than-honorable" discharge from the Navy, according to Fox News. The Navy did not immediately respond to a request concerning Saucier.

Saucier pleaded guilty and was sentenced last year to one year in federal prison. He started his term in October at Fort Devens in Massachusetts.

The Clinton argument came up last year in a court filing from Saucier's attorneys, who said that the former secretary of state had engaged in similar acts, according to Politico, which first reported the story.

"In our case, Mr. Saucier possessed six (6) photographs classified as 'confidential/restricted,' far less than Clinton's 110 emails," the attorneys wrote in an August

2016 sentencing memorandum, adding: "It will be unjust and unfair for Mr. Saucier to receive any sentence other than probation for a crime those more powerful than him will likely avoid."

As The Post previously reported, Trump also made the comparison between Clinton and Saucier's cases — to try to show that people have indeed been punished for mishandling classified material in the past.

The article stated:

But Saucier's case is not exactly comparable, either. The Navy sailor was sentenced to prison after taking photos in classified areas of a nuclear submarine. He then destroyed the evidence after learning that he was under investigation. In fact, Saucier's lawyers even acknowledged that the two cases were different: Saucier admitted knowing that what he was doing was illegal, unlike Clinton.

When asked about the accusations against federal prosecutors, Tom Carson, a spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Connecticut, said in a statement to The Post that "for any pardon application, when the Office of the Pardon Attorney requests our office's position on a pardon, we will review the application and provide our position."

Similarly, last year, a Marine officer facing separation from the military for mishandling classified information also planned to use the Clinton defense.

In 2012, Maj. Jason Brezler had sent classified information to fellow Marines using a Yahoo email address, warning them about a potentially corrupt Afghan police chief, The Post's Dan Lamothe reported. When Brezler was threatened with separation from the military, he sued — and his lawyer said he would use Clinton's email case to fight it in court.

In December, a federal judge ruled that the Marine Corps could not remove Brezler from the service because it had not given him all the documents relevant to his case before his administrative hearing.

Most recently, in his last days as president, former president Barack Obama commuted the 35-year prison sentence of Chelsea Manning, the Army private convicted of leaking classified documents to WikiLeaks.

In Saucier's case, his attorneys are arguing that the punishment was "way out of the norm."

Ronald Daigle, an attorney for Saucier, said he met last month with Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, Trump's national security adviser, to talk about a possible pardon.

"He was a career sailor," Daigle said of Saucier, "so he has some disappointing days, but he's a true patriot and he thinks things are going to turn out for the best."

Is Ivanka Trump Jewish? In Israel, She Has A Trump Card

By Daniel Estrin

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

PETAH TIKVA, Israel (AP) – Is Ivanka Trump really Jewish?

Last summer, Israel's religious authorities issued a ruling that raised doubts about her conversion to Judaism. But after her father was elected president, they have changed their tune, raising eyebrows among activists who have long lobbied the rabbinical establishment to be more tolerant toward converts.

President Donald Trump's daughter converted to Judaism under a prominent Orthodox rabbi in Manhattan before her 2009 marriage to Jared Kushner, an observant Jew.

In its ruling last July, an Israeli government religious court rejected the legitimacy of another conversion by the same rabbi. Although it didn't directly affect Ivanka Trump, it raised questions as to whether Israel's powerful religious establishment would recognize her as being Jewish.

But in early December, just weeks after Trump's election victory, Israel's chief rabbis said they would work to change the rules for recognizing conversions performed abroad – and they singled out Ivanka Trump.

"According to the new proposed plan ... her conversion will be certified without the need for additional checks," the announcement said.

Israeli activists say the sudden policy change appears to be an attempt to curry favor with the new U.S. president. Ivanka Trump's husband has been appointed a senior adviser to Trump and is expected to focus on Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts.

An Israeli rabbinic committee has already met several times to discuss conversion policy, a speedier pace than usual, activists say.

"The timing is certainly suspicious," said Rabbi Seth Farber, director of ITIM, an organization that represents converts seeking recognition from the rabbinate. "My biggest fear is that the rabbinate will find some way to find Ms. Trump kosher, to recognize her conversion, but leave thousands of other converts behind, simply saying they're not Jewish enough for us."

The Jewish Week, a New York newspaper, quoted an anonymous source with ties to Trump's presidential transition team as saying high-ranking aides had expressed concern to Israel regarding the legitimacy of Ivanka Trump's conversion, and that Israeli efforts to recognize her conversion would foster a closer relationship between the Trump family and Israel.

A spokeswoman for Trump did not return a request for confirmation, and Rabbi Levi Shemtov, a rabbi in Washington who is close to Ivanka Trump, declined comment.

A spokesman for one of Israel's chief rabbis said the proposed changes were a long time coming and not a direct result of Trump's election.

"Even before Ivanka Trump, it was talked about," said spokesman Pinchas Tennenbaum, adding that the media attention "added problems, and we take it to heart."

Since Ivanka Trump does not live in Israel, for her the issue is largely hypothetical. But for converts in Israel, the rabbinate's ruling affects their daily lives. If they are not recognized as Jewish, they are not permitted to marry in Israel, and they are technically ineligible for a religious burial when they die.

Israel's Orthodox establishment does not recognize conversions performed by the more liberal Reform and Conservative streams of Judaism, to which most American Jews belong. But immigration officials have more relaxed guidelines and do allow Reform and Conservative converts to gain citizenship in Israel as Jews.

These days, many Israelis simply wave off the rabbinate as irrelevant. Secular Israelis often wed in civil ceremonies abroad to avoid the rabbinate, while many ultra-Orthodox Jews dismiss the rabbinate's certification of kosher food as too lax. Some Israelis perceive the rabbinate as corrupt: A former Israeli chief rabbi was sentenced to three and a half years in prison this week following charges of corruption and bribery.

"The rabbinate is a fossil of an institution that does not succeed in grappling with modern needs," said Nahum Barnea, a leading Israeli columnist. "Most Israelis see the recognition of Ivanka Trump's Judaism, or lack of recognition, as a joke."

Under the proposed reform, the rabbinate would establish clear guidelines for which rabbis abroad are deemed fit to perform conversions, rather than the current practice of evaluating each individual convert.

All foreign-born Jews seeking a marriage license in Israel must first be checked by the rabbinate to ensure they are indeed Jewish. Between 2013 and 2015, some 5,000 people asked the rabbinate to recognize them as Jews, according to rabbinate figures.

Critics say Israeli rabbinical courts reject dozens of converts each year, claiming their Orthodox conversions were not stringent enough and in some case questioning their motives and levels of observance.

The issue reached a boiling point last year when an Israeli rabbinical court refused to recognize the conversion of a 31-year-old American, Nicole Zeitler.

While working in New York, she converted to Judaism after a year and a half of study that included Hebrew lessons, a weekly questionnaire on Jewish topics and twice-a-week meetings with Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, a senior rabbi in the U.S. Orthodox community who also oversaw Ivanka Trump's conversion.

"It was intense. I learned it and I lived it," Zeitler said.

She moved to Israel and became engaged to an Israeli, but a rabbinical court would not grant her a marriage license, dismissing Lookstein's credentials.

The move created an uproar in Israel, with the speaker of the Israeli parliament and head of Israel's Labor party, who know Lookstein personally, petitioning the rabbinate to reconsider. In the end, the supreme rabbinical court persuaded Zeitler to undergo a quickened conversion by reciting a special declaration of faith, rather than recognize Lookstein's conversion.

"The Israeli rabbinic establishment is an ultra-conservative establishment. Rabbi Lookstein is considered a more open-minded Orthodox rabbi," Farber said. "It rubs some of the rabbinical authorities the wrong way." Lookstein declined comment and deferred to Farber to speak on his behalf.

Elad Kaplan, a lawyer for ITIM who represented Zeitler in the religious court, believes the rabbinate's promise to resolve the conversion controversy is directly connected to Trump's election.

"It would definitely be embarrassing to the state of Israel and the rabbinate if...Ivanka Trump's family were to visit Israel and for the official Jewish authorities in Israel to not recognize their Judaism," Kaplan said.

As for Zeitler, she acknowledged it was "a little fishy" that the rabbis were suddenly interested in changing the rules on conversions.

"On the other hand, I'm happy that Trump is president, and that this may change things in the system," she said, speaking from her small apartment in the central Israeli city of Petah Tikva, where she lives with her husband. "I mean, isn't this how things happen in the world anyway? Someone super famous and important has to come up and, in this case, be Jewish, to make a big change?"

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Follow Daniel Estrin on Twitter at www.twitter.com/danielestrin

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In Sudden Change, A Business Group Opts To Rent Event Space At A Trump Hotel

By Drew Harwell And Alan Freeman

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

The American Chamber of Commerce in Canada had long planned to hold a meeting Thursday night at the

Vancouver, B.C., home of a U.S. diplomatic official to talk about trade relations in the Donald Trump era.

Then, two days ago, the group suddenly switched its plan — choosing instead to rent space for 2,500 Canadian dollars at the glittering new hotel tower bearing the U.S. president's name.

"Don't miss this opportunity to see Vancouver's newest hotel and hear about the newest U.S. President's options on trade," read the email to members of the group, which is an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

President Trump does not own the Trump International Hotel & Tower Vancouver, but he has a stake in the hotel's success, as its developers pay his private company for the rights to use his name and to manage the property.

The Chamber event is the latest reminder of a key point of tension around Trump's rise to power, in which he is shaping U.S. policy while maintaining ownership of his high-profile business interests worldwide. And it offers another indication of the ways Trump's presidency stands to benefit his corporate brand.

Mar-a-Lago, Trump's private oceanfront club in Palm Beach, Fla., moved after the election to double its new-member fee to $200,000. An executive for the resort brand Trump Hotels also voiced interest this week in expanding into every major American metropolitan area. And Trump's new hotel in Washington, blocks from the White House, has drawn new business from foreign diplomats and the embassies of Azerbaijan, Bahrain and Kuwait.

Although Trump has removed himself from management of his businesses, his refusal to divest has drawn criticism from ethics experts who say that he stands to personally profit from his public office and that the setup presents a web of potential ethical conflicts.

The change of venue for Thursday's event in Canada sparked concerns that the business lobby was seeking to curry favor with Trump — prompting one participant to consider backing out.

"This is horrible!" wrote Matilde Bombardini, an economist at the University of British Columbia and one of two panelists scheduled to speak. "I don't want to take part in this. I am ready to withdraw my participation. But do you think it's going to be more valuable to the greater cause of human decency if I go and speak my mind?"

The event's other speaker, Stockwell Day, a former Conservative Party cabinet minister, said he had no problem with the location, noting that Trump had taken steps to distance himself from his company. "Everything is open and transparent," Day said. "It wouldn't stop me from golfing on one of his golf courses or buying one of his branded products."

Attendees were told in the Tuesday email that the event was being moved because of "unforeseen circumstances." A U.S. Embassy spokesman said organizers were told within the past week that no events could take place in the diplomatic residence because it needs urgent repairs.

Jeffrey Peterson, a Chamber vice president and partner in the Vancouver law firm of Dorsey & Whitney, said a leak at the consul general's residence forced the event to move. He said that politics had nothing to do with the selection of the Trump hotel.

"They had space available at the last moment," Peterson said, adding that he personally had nothing to do with organizing the event or the location.

Laura Ballance, a board member of the Chamber's Pacific chapter, said the group was racing to find a new venue after members were told Tuesday that the diplomatic residence was no longer available.

The group, she said, is nonpartisan but traditionally favors venues that are American-owned or branded. The Trump hotel, whose Canada-based developer is the son of one of Malaysia's wealthiest business leaders, was the first to respond with an offer for meeting space in downtown Vancouver, Ballance said.

"For us, it's not a partisan decision. It's about finding space on very short notice that can accommodate this group on a very important discussion," she said.

"We're here to understand and navigate the new path forward with the new administration," she added.

The hotel's fee includes a meeting room and a few light appetizers for the roughly 60 attendees, Ballance said.

Neither the hotel nor Trump Organization officials responded to requests for comment.

The Vancouver condo and hotel tower, the first foreign business launch of the Trump brand during the new presidency, has received an "overwhelming amount of reservations," developers told The Washington Post this week.

The Chamber says its members include executives from American and Canadian businesses operating in both countries, as well as government organizations invested "in the expansion and enhancement of cross-border business opportunities."

The event's topics of discussion are to include Trump's resistance to major trade deals and the future of U.S. negotiations with Canada and Mexico. Trump's criticism of free trade agreements, and his vow to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, has become a major topic of concern for members of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as well as Canadian businesses.

A formal opening of the hotel, which developers said members of the Trump family will attend, is expected late next month.

Freeman reported from Ottawa.

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Trump Is His Administration's Own Worst Enemy On Foreign Policy

By David Ignatius

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

President Trump's slash-and-burn actions in his first week have been dramatic, but dangerously lacking in a consensus of support, even within his own administration. The risks were evident in the collapse of a planned meeting with Mexico's president and in Trump's embrace of torture tactics rejected by his secretary of defense and CIA director.

Trump's "tweet from the hip" style produced its first real foreign rupture Thursday, when Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto canceled a planned visit to Washington. That followed Trump's tweet that he should stay away if he wasn't ready to pay for the often-proclaimed border wall.

The Twitter grenade blew up what had been an attempt to finesse the issue with a delayed Mexican financial contribution for the wall, an approach that Trump himself had only hours before supported in an interview with ABC's David Muir. Now, Trump has an avoidable Mexico crisis to deal with.

The torture issue was another self-inflicted wound. The CIA doesn't want to go back into the secret detention and waterboarding business. There's a law banning torture, for the simple reason that it "shocks the conscience" of many Americans. And some foreign intelligence services would refuse to share information with a United States that used such techniques.

The weird disconnect between Trump's wrecking-ball comments and the more delicate process of governing was illustrated by the flap over a draft executive order to revive the CIA's "black sites" for detention and interrogation. After the memo surfaced Wednesday in the New York Times, Trump spokesman Sean Spicer insisted that it was "not a White House document."

But then a few hours later, Trump was raging in his interview with Muir that torture "works . . . absolutely" and "we have to fight fire with fire." Like so many of Trump's tweets, these comments are disruptive and destabilizing — but mainly to his own administration. They make the job of new CIA Director Mike Pompeo harder.

If the first week of the Trump presidency showed us anything, it's that he is more determined to overturn the established trade, economic and national-security order than even his critics feared. So far, there's more Stephen K. Bannon and less Reince Priebus in this White House. The costs of Trump's impulsive, thin-skinned behavior have also become clearer. He keeps proclaiming how well he's doing, but his aides have seemingly worked nonstop to put out fires ignited by their boss.

Whether Trump's tweeting and his alt-right tilt can be tempered by James Mattis at Defense and Rex Tillerson at State looks more dubious. This will worry foreign leaders who had found the Mattis and Tillerson nominations reassuring, and were prepared to believe that Trump's bark might be worse than his bite on issues that matter to global allies.

Trump's bombastic nature undermines his ability to address the problems he cares most about. Take Mexico: It doesn't want a trade war with the United States, and Peña Nieto has been working to resolve border-security and NAFTA-renegotiation issues. But Trump's humiliating tweet (prompted, presumably, by his fear of being challenged for willingness to compromise) backed Peña Nieto into a political corner. The outcome is contrary to both countries' interests.

Similarly, Trump's public endorsement of torture undermines his deeper effort to combat terrorism. Because of public revulsion over waterboarding, and the CIA's refusal to resume interrogation activities without clear, sustainable legal authority, it's now easier for the United States to kill terrorists with drones than to capture and interrogate them. The rise in such "targeted killing" may take terrorists off the battlefield, but it doesn't yield intelligence.

"The U.S. has abandoned any effort to capture, detain and interrogate terrorists," argues Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, a former CIA officer who now teaches at the Harvard Kennedy School. "Killing terrorists with drones does not produce information on terrorist plans and intentions. It makes eminent sense to emphasize recruitment and capture operations in addition to lethal drones and bombings. As the crude saying goes, 'you can't kill them all.' "

John McLaughlin, a former acting CIA director, speaks for a consensus in the agency when he says "it would be a mistake to go back in that direction," with case officers tasked with running secret interrogation sites. But the larger point is that "the issue is so politicized that you cannot have the sober policy discussion" that's needed on how to collect better intelligence through interrogation.

During his first week in office, Trump has been his own loudest cheerleader. He has also been his own worst enemy. As with any other form of self-destructive behavior, it's time for an intervention by those closest to him.

We Ignore Trump At Our Peril

By Eugene Robinson

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

Where to begin? That's the daily question for anyone trying to follow the words and deeds of the new administration, which is like drinking from two fire hoses — one gushing policy, the other spewing insanity.

Neither stream can be ignored. I wish I could agree with those who say we should pay little attention to President Trump's verbal eruptions and focus only on concrete actions, but I can't. It matters that the most powerful man in the world insists on "facts" that are nothing but self-aggrandizing fantasy. It matters that the president of the United States

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seems incapable of publicly admitting any error. It matters that Trump's need for adulation appears to be insatiable.

The president's most acute obsession is with the false notion that he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton only because of widespread election fraud committed by "millions" of people.

There were, in fact, four documented cases of voter fraud in the election. Yes, I said four; two of them involved individuals who said they were Trump supporters. House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) is among the many officials who have acknowledged there is zero evidence of the kind of fraud Trump alleges. It simply did not happen.

When pressed on the subject, Trump cites a 2012 report by the Pew Center on the States that found problems with inaccurate voter registration rolls — but no indication of fraud, according to the study's author. When David Muir of ABC News pointed this out to Trump in an interview on Wednesday, the president claimed the author of the Pew study was now "groveling," whatever that means. I have read the study, and indeed it presents no evidence of voter fraud.

At a meeting with congressional leaders on Monday, Trump cited a different piece of purported proof, according to the New York Times: He told a story about how professional golfer Bernhard Langer tried to vote in Florida on Election Day but was not allowed to do so, while suspicious-looking voters ahead of and behind him, possibly Latin American immigrants, were permitted to cast provisional ballots.

At the risk of repeating myself, this simply did not happen. Langer indeed lives in Florida but is a German citizen. He has never voted in this country.

Why is any of this important? Because Trump, relying on a misinterpreted study and a garbled anecdote, has called for a "major investigation" of all this nonexistent voter fraud. He now has the vast resources of the Justice Department at his disposal, which means that if he wants a big investigation, he can have one. Press secretary Sean Spicer said Wednesday that the focus would be on "urban" areas, and he mentioned California and New York — both of which voted heavily for Clinton — as states that may be looked at carefully.

What we have, then, is an instance in which Trump's fixation on his own popularity, or lack thereof, dovetails with the Republican Party's long-standing political interest in minimizing the electoral weight of Democratic "urban" strongholds — meaning cities with large populations of minorities and liberals. We should prepare for a GOP attempt to channel Trump's delusion into the rational, but nefarious, purpose of voter suppression.

Another example is Trump's insistence on the value of torture in the fight against terrorism. Trump pledged during the campaign to bring back waterboarding and "much worse." Doing so would violate U.S. and international law. Trump has said he will leave the decision up to Defense Secretary James N. Mattis and CIA Director Mike Pompeo, neither of whom has shown the slightest enthusiasm for getting the United States back into the torture business.

So can we relax? Not really, because Trump won't admit he was wrong. He said in the interview with Muir that "we have to fight fire with fire" in the battle against the Islamic State and that torture "absolutely" works. Since Trump is the commander in chief, words such as these create political problems at home for friends such as British Prime Minister Theresa May, who is scheduled to meet with Trump on Friday. How can allies fully share intelligence with the United States if they believe captured suspects may be tortured?

My point is that Trump's off-the-wall statements and Twitter rants cannot be dismissed as mere attempts to distract. We have a president who is obsessed with his public standing, given to outlandish statements, eager to believe in conspiracy theories and unwilling to admit when he is wrong. To our peril, his character and moods will shape his policies.

Why A Tweeting President Is So Bad For Our Politics

By Michael Gerson

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

All political leaders, presidents in particular, dream of using technology to avoid the media filter and speak directly to the American people.

Thomas Jefferson — both eloquent founder and appalling political hack — weaponized the pamphlet, commissioning scandalmonger James Callender to write a hit job on Alexander Hamilton. Warren Harding pioneered the political use of radio, which was perfected by Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose ambitions were aided by having a good radio voice. Not everyone was a fan of the medium. When a radio microphone was put in front of diplomat Elihu Root, he is said to have responded: "Take that away. I can talk to a Democrat, but I cannot speak into a dead thing."

John F. Kennedy's political appeal was unimaginable without televised images of his youth, vigor and physical grace. Ronald Reagan talked to the camera like an old, single-eyed friend.

But no president has really possessed the technical means to routinely avoid edited, moderated mass communication until now. President Trump holds his office, in part, because of his talent for Twitter. He has shown a remarkable ability to dominate the news cycle and redirect the national conversation in increments of 140 characters. For Trump, this medium is a living, snarling and hungry thing.

Make no mistake: This is not only change, it is regression. I make this judgment both as a fogey and a former speechwriter. A presidential speech may be two thousand or three thousand words, every one of them run through the staffing process (in which senior White House

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officials can comment), fact-checked and approved by the president before delivery. A good presidential speech is the result of both thought and craft. A great presidential speech reflects literary, historical and moral inspiration and can speak far beyond its moment.

I understand the usefulness of social media in aggregating flows of information that people trust, enjoy and need. It allows people to essentially be their own editors (the value of which is determined by the news literacy of the user). And some people have a remarkable knack for communicating in vivid fragments. Pope Francis (with 10 million Twitter followers) distributes bits of wisdom and comfort like virtual communion wafers. Katy Perry (with more followers than the population of Germany) says, well, whatever it is that Katy Perry says.

But in politics, Twitter has dramatic limits and can become a disturbing substitute for disciplined thought.

One hundred and forty characters are suitable to expressing an impulse, but not an argument. It is the rhetorical equivalent of a groan, a shriek, a sneer or a burp. If reason and persuasion are what our politics lacks and needs, Twitter is not the answer.

Trump's mastery and extensive use of Twitter are revealing in a way he does not intend. This is the only area in which Trump can be considered a great communicator. His stump speech was a disorganized, repetitive, unfocused mess. His inaugural address was memorable only in ways — such as its dark, shrunken view of the United States itself — that deserve to be forgotten. His recent speech at the CIA was strangely inappropriate and offensive. So he often returns to the comfort zone of Twitter. He claims Hillary Clinton lost in a "landslide," or goes after a specific news organization, or makes entirely unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud.

Some feel that journalism would be better served by ignoring such shiny objects. But the shallowness of Trump's preferred form of communication indicates deeper things. His mind seems perfectly suited to a medium that rewards impulsiveness, that ignores fact-checking and that encourages incivility. Those are not generally the traits we hope for in a new president.

And Trump's use of Twitter raises the prospect of a serious abuse of power. A private citizen with 22 million followers (as Trump has) can be a vindictive jerk, attacking the owner of the Chicago Cubs, the head of the United Steelworkers or a Gold Star family by name. A president with 22 million followers, including the shock troops of Internet bullying, can destroy an individual's life as surely as can targeting by the FBI or the IRS.

At moments of frustration, Trump will be sorely tempted to attack specific people on Twitter. But a government official should not be allowed to take the reputation or peace of any citizen without due process. It is the president's job to enforce laws without distinction, not to choose specific men and women for harm. This would be the practice of personal rule, and a scary detour toward Putinism.

Trump's Government Looks An Awful Lot Like A Badly Run Business

By Catherine Rampell

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

If this is what "running government like a business" looks like, it's no wonder President Trump's companies kept going bankrupt.

One week into the presidency, we've gotten a taste of Trump's management style. And so far it's been plagued by many of the bad habits common to poorly run businesses.

Take, for example, his administration's clear indifference to — or outright rejection of — good measurement and analytics.

One of the first things you learn from talking to management experts and successful entrepreneurs is the importance of having a clear set of objectives, as well as good, consistent metrics for determining whether those objectives have been met.

Or, as Trump's commerce secretary nominee, Wilbur Ross, argued not once but twice in his confirmation hearing last week: "I have a very heartfelt saying in management that anything you can't measure, you can't manage."

Ross, arguably the most business-savvy of Trump's Cabinet picks, has not yet been confirmed. In his absence, the administration has not exactly been taking his "heartfelt saying" to heart.

During a news conference Monday, for instance, White House press secretary Sean Spicer refused to answer a simple measurement question: What is the current unemployment rate?

The answer is not exactly a secret. Three weeks ago, the Labor Department publicly announced its latest reading as 4.7 percent.

But Spicer — whose boss has variously claimed the rate is "a total fiction" and as high as "42 percent" — ducked. Instead of providing the figure, or even citing alternative metrics he thought could be better gauges of economic health (such as measures of underemployment or labor force participation), Spicer pooh-poohed interest in quantitative gauges altogether.

"The president, he's not focused on statistics as much as he is on whether or not the American people are doing better as a whole," Spicer said.

He went on to admonish "Washington" for fixating on numbers and forgetting "the faces and the families and the businesses that are behind those numbers."

Bully for Trump for caring about helping real people (people with faces!) rather than statistics (notoriously lacking

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in faces). But numbers are the best tool we have for assessing whether the administration actually lives up to its promise to make sure "the American people are doing better as a whole."

If you pulled this kind of stunt in business — arguing that, say, growth targets or other quantifiable metrics don't matter, and only some ineffable sensation of "success" does — you'd probably fail.

With Ross as a possible exception, Trump's personnel decisions also bear many of the hallmarks of badly run companies.

He's made hiring decisions based not on qualifications or experience, but on whether candidates are members of his family or have the right "look." Funny facial hair, inadequate height and absence of "swagger" reportedly disqualified some contenders.

He's likewise instituted an indefinite, across-the-board hiring freeze, despite the fact that the federal government has clearly identifiable, critical needs for staffing up in select areas, including for the 2017 Economic Census and preparations for the 2020 Census (I know, those pesky numbers again).

Not to mention that a Government Accountability Office analysis of across-the-board hiring freezes implemented by earlier presidents found that the resulting agency disruptions increased costs to taxpayers in the long run. Targeted freezes and cuts, the report said, are more effective.

Addressing bureaucratic bloat with a chainsaw rather than a scalpel isn't leadership; it's laziness. Yet that's how his administration has thus far approached regulation, too.

Rather than thoughtfully assessing rules and regulations coming down the pike — by, say, conducting a cost-benefit analysis, as you might in a real-life business — Trump halted them across the board. They include one related to keeping airplanes from crashing. (It's about inspecting aircraft fuselages for cracks.)

Finally, Trump has recently committed to spending billions of dollars on pet projects that are essentially expensive solutions to problems that don't exist: a border wall with Mexico, despite the fact that we've seen a net outflow of unauthorized Mexican immigrants in recent years, and a "voter fraud" investigation into the "millions" of illegal votes that he believes — with zero evidence — were cast in an election he won.

Again, hard to imagine that such costly, low-upside executive windmill-chasing would fly at a competitive business.

Needless to say, there are major differences between running a business and running a government; it's a myth that aptitude at one necessarily translates to aptitude at the other.

But with ineptitude, maybe it's a different story.

Elon Musk Has Trump's Ear, And Wall Street Takes Note

By James B. Stewart

New York Times, January 26, 2017

The election of Donald Trump and the accompanying rehabilitation of fossil fuels should have been, by all rights, devastating for Tesla Motors.

Tesla is the top maker of all-electric autos, and it completed its merger with SolarCity, a leading manufacturer of solar energy panels, days after the presidential election.

Elon Musk, the visionary founder of both companies, openly criticized Mr. Trump's candidacy, saying on CNBC just before the vote that he was "not the right guy" for the job.

Mr. Musk has pressed for a carbon tax to combat global warming, which Mr. Trump once dismissed as a Chinese hoax. The mere mention of a carbon tax inflames the old guard of the energy industry.

Moreover, both Tesla and SolarCity benefit from federal subsidies. Robert E. Murray, a coal executive and Trump supporter, has called Mr. Musk "a fraud" for accepting $2 billion in government handouts.

So why have Tesla shares surged since Mr. Trump's election, closing this week within striking distance of a record high?

Adam Jonas, a prominent automotive analyst at Morgan Stanley, upgraded Tesla stock to overweight last week, with a target price of $305 a share. (It was trading this week at about $255.)

"When you look at the businesses Tesla is in, you see many areas of overlapping interest" with the Trump administration, Mr. Jonas told me. "To the extent the new administration prioritizes the creation of valuable, innovative high tech and manufacturing jobs, Tesla stands at the epicenter of that."

Shares in pure solar energy companies haven't fared as well, but even they have now regained nearly all the ground they lost immediately after Mr. Trump's victory. Solar investors "aren't nearly as negative as they were the day after the election," said Andrew Hughes, an alternative energy analyst for Credit Suisse.

One reason for that shift seems to be a budding bromance between Mr. Trump and Mr. Musk. The president-elect invited Mr. Musk to Trump Tower in December as part of a group of technology executives and named him to his strategic and policy forum of business leaders.

And Mr. Musk was with a group of manufacturing executives at a White House meeting this week at which, according to a participant, he broached the subject of a carbon tax. Surprisingly, Mr. Trump didn't reject it out of hand.

For his part, Mr. Musk this week endorsed Rex W. Tillerson, a pillar of the fossil fuel establishment as chief executive of Exxon Mobil, for secretary of state.

Mr. Jonas said that the "strategic relationship between Tesla leadership and the new administration is an important development" in his decision to upgrade Tesla stock. "That Trump would be relying on Musk as an adviser has come as quite a surprise to many people," Mr. Jonas said.

A major fear of investors in solar power was that a Trump administration would end the federal subsidies so reviled by fossil fuel proponents. While that remains a concern, the most recent jobs data suggests that the subsidies have led to a surge in new well-paid jobs, exactly what Mr. Trump has advocated.

This month, the Energy Department noted in its annual energy and jobs report that "solar technologies, both photovoltaic and concentrated, employ almost 374,000 workers, or 43 percent of the electric power generation work force." (Coal, by contrast, accounts for about 86,000 workers.)

"The jobs data is a compelling argument in favor of the tax credits," Mr. Hughes said. He noted that federal solar subsidies were set to expire anyway in a few years, a result of rare bipartisan cooperation in Congress. Mr. Musk has stressed that solar energy is close to reaching a scale where federal subsidies will no longer be needed.

And Tesla is also expanding rapidly. Tesla employs 25,000 workers in the United States and could easily double that as it ramps up production for its new Model 3 and expands its Gigafactory, a lithium ion battery manufacturing operation in Nevada. "I don't know what kind of multiplier you put on that, but it's a significant boost to the economy," Mr. Jonas said.

Federal subsidies for electric vehicles will also end once a manufacturer hits 200,000 vehicles, a level Tesla may soon reach.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Musk appear to have other areas of overlapping interest as well. Mr. Musk has broached the subject of the nation's aging electricity transmission grid in conversations with Mr. Trump, according to an insider with knowledge of the discussions. Mr. Musk has advocated a so-called smart grid and has said that eventually Tesla will offer grid services, such as batteries that can be added to the grid and paired with solar and wind farms. This is the kind of high-impact infrastructure project that Mr. Trump has supported.

And Tesla's success could help fend off Chinese efforts to compete or even dominate in what could be an important piece of the car industry's future.

But the ultimate bond between the two may simply be that they both like to think big.

As Joel Achenbach has reported in The Washington Post, Mr. Musk seems to have captured the new president's imagination with his SpaceX project — which designs, manufactures and launches advanced rockets and spacecraft — and his fascination with transporting human life to other planets. A manned mission to Mars (a joint venture between NASA and SpaceX that would reduce the costs and risks to taxpayers) might well become Mr. Trump's version of "landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the Earth" within a decade, the challenge that President John F. Kennedy set before Congress in 1961.

It's still early in the Trump administration, and some (or all) of this may turn out to be wishful thinking by fans of Mr. Musk, Tesla investors, environmentalists and hopeful space colonists.

"I want to believe that Trump won't kill solar," Mr. Hughes said. "But there's still a lot of uncertainty. The big question: Will he take away the tax credits?"

Still, there's a growing sense that Mr. Trump and Tesla can not only coexist, but even thrive together. "You don't have to be anti-electric to be pro-fossil fuel," Mr. Jonas said.

Military Brass Fill Donald Trump's National Security Council

President's appointments reflect his campaign pledge to target Islamic militants

By Jay Solomon

Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Donald Trump's Speech To CIA Was 'Sweet Talk' Masking 'Falsehoods', Says Former Intelligence Officer

By Matt Broomfield

Independent (UK), January 26, 2017

Donald Trump's speech at the CIA's headquarters has been criticised by a former officer with the US spy agency who witnessed it first hand.

The US President has described his visit to the compound in Langley, Virginia as a "WIN". It was his first official act in office.

But Nada Bakos, who spent a decade with CIA, was less than impressed.

Read more

If Donald Trump delivered his inauguration on Twitter...

Mexico's former president says they won't pay for Trump's border wall

Americans say Trump unable to handle international crisis, poll finds

Professors express 'grave concerns' for Trump's mental stability

"You can't sweet talk a good spy," she said in a video uploaded to Twitter. "Falsehoods and 'alternative facts' are no way to win over a workforce whose job it is to discern the truth."

Ms Bakos' role with the agency saw her draw up strategies for the war on terror and track the jihadist leader

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi – seen by some as the founder of the group which became Isis. He was assassinated in 2006 after he was discovered in a safehouse in rural Iraq.

Now a security analyst with the Foreign Policy Research Institute think tank, she said she had been "very hopeful" before Mr Trump's speech.

As a former CIA analyst and targeting officer, here's what I think about Trump's speech at the #CIA on Saturday: pic.twitter.com/6JddSmAJhW — Nada Bakos (@nadabakos) January 25, 2017

"I was hoping that he would reach out to the workforce as an olive branch after the hostile relationship that he had promoted between him and the intelligence community," she said.

Relations have been strained between the new President and the intelligence agencies, after Mr Trump wrongly accused them of leaking an unverified, salacious document to damage his nascent presidency.

He had earlier likened them to Nazi Germany in a tweet, saying they "never should have allowed this fake news to 'leak' to the public. One last shot at me".

Donald Trump performs U-turn by praising the CIA

Ms Bakos said: "I was very hopeful that he would understand the building that he was standing in and that he would understand the apolitical nature of the work that they do. The objectivity that they strive for in their analysis."

She added: "I didn't see a president trying to repair the relationship. I didn't see a president that made an effort to understand the solemnness and the humility it should take to speak in front of that wall."

Ms Bakos was referring to the CIA Wall of Honour, a memorial carved with 117 stars representing agents who have died while working for the intelligence agency.

Had a great meeting at CIA Headquarters yesterday, packed house, paid great respect to Wall, long standing ovations, amazing people. WIN! — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) January 22, 2017

Only 84 have their names listed in a goatskin book kept below the wall, with some personal information considered too classified to be released.

Ms Bakos said that Mr Trump only referred to the wall once in passing.

She added that the "scariest repurcussions" of Mr Trump's behaviour were that "the employees of the CIA will be strong armed to fall in line, through subtle or not so subtle means, denigrating trust" in the agency.

In a separate interview, former senior CIA official Paul Pillar told AlterNet that the relationship between the President and the CIA "is the worst of any incoming administration ever."

Want To Track Cellphones? Get A Warrant, Lawmakers Say

By Dave Collins

Associated Press, January 26, 2017

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) – Law enforcement cellphone tracking devices are coming under scrutiny in several states, where lawmakers have introduced proposals ranging from warrant requirements to an outright ban on the technology.

Privacy and constitutional concerns, including Fourth Amendment search and seizure violations, are being cited with the proposed laws on cell-site simulators.

The suitcase-size devices, widely known under the brand name Stingray, mimic cellphone towers and allow law enforcement to collect unique subscriber numbers and other basic data from cellphones in a particular area. The data can help police determine the location of a targeted phone – and phones of innocent bystanders – in real time without the users even making calls or sending text messages.

Law enforcement officials say the devices are vital in helping to find suspects and victims, and to solve crimes.

At least 13 states already require warrants to track cellphones in real time: California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Utah and Virginia.

Federal law enforcement officers also must get warrants, under policies put in place in 2015 by the departments of Justice and Homeland Security.

Courts around the country, meanwhile, have issued conflicting opinions about whether warrants are needed for cellphone location data, leading to a hodgepodge of rules.

Bills addressing use of the devices are now pending in at least eight states, according to a review by The Associated Press. Most of them would require police to get warrants. One bill, introduced by South Carolina state Rep. J. Todd Rutherford, would ban the purchase and use of cell-site simulators by law enforcement.

"I think most people would be offended if they knew exactly how much surveillance the government is doing," said Rutherford, a Democrat from Columbia who is the House minority leader and a criminal defense lawyer. "It's got to stop somewhere."

Rutherford isn't even sure if any police agencies in his state are using the simulators. Many state and local law enforcement agencies sign nondisclosure agreements with the device manufacturer.

The American Civil Liberties Union says it has identified 70 law enforcement agencies in 23 states and the District of Columbia that own cell-site simulators. But the actual number may be much higher because many agencies keep their use of the devices secret, the ACLU said.

This year, lawmakers in at least six states are proposing bills to require warrants to use cellphone

surveillance devices: Connecticut, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York and Oregon. A California bill would require local governments to approve the use of cell-site simulators and other surveillance technology.

In Connecticut, state Rep. Rob Sampson introduced a bill to require warrants, with exceptions for terrorism and other life-and-death situations.

"A cellphone is an individual's private property and law enforcement has no right monitoring activity on these devices unless there is strong reason to believe the individual is engaging in illegal activity," the Wolcott Republican said.

It also isn't clear whether any police agencies in Connecticut are using cell-site simulators. State police, Hartford police and New Haven police say they don't use the devices. Police in Bridgeport said they do not comment on their surveillance technology.

Last month, the U.S. House Oversight and Government Reform Committee issued a report calling for clearer guidelines.

"There's still a real pressing need for states to regulate this technology," said Nathan Freed Wessler, staff attorney for the ACLU's speech, privacy and technology project. "These devices are extraordinarily powerful and invasive. They can very precisely track where people's phones are, and knowing where someone's phone is can tell you a lot about them."

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Mattis Is Trying To Repair The Damage Trump Is Doing

By Jennifer Rubin

Washington Post, January 26, 2017

Since taking office, President Trump has announced an "America First" policy, formally pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, painted a bleak picture of America, delivered a campaign-style inaugural address and embarked on a series of showy but unnecessary and expensive immigration initiatives. Meanwhile, Defense Secretary James Mattis has:

Publicly embraced the intelligence community (which Trump has publicly ridiculed and feuded with).

Praised NATO and reached out to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg "to reconnect and discuss the key role NATO plays in transatlantic security. The secretary, who previously served as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander for Transformation, wanted to place the call on his first full day in office to reinforce the importance he places on the alliance. The two leaders discussed the importance of our shared values, and the secretary emphasized that when looking for allies to help defend these values, the United States always starts with Europe."

Scheduled a trip to visit badly shaken allies in Asia. ("Secretary of Defense James Mattis will embark on his first trip as secretary Feb. 1-4 to meet with his counterparts from two critical allies, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The four day trip will include stops in Seoul and Tokyo. … The trip will underscore the commitment of the United States to our enduring alliances with Japan and the Republic of Korea, and further strengthen U.S.-Japan-Republic of Korea security cooperation.")

Delivered a moving and unifying speech to his department.

Speaking in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day (which occurred before he took office), he told the Pentagon civilian and military employees on Wednesday:

We've experienced the coequal commitment — didn't matter what rank you were, didn't matter if you're civilian or military — a coequal commitment across this department to the mission. And it's a mission that calls for all hands to strive together and to fight together and to look out for one another.

Today, we observe the legacy of a man up here on the board behind me — a man who has called upon Americans many times to strive together and to fight together and to do their duty in the long struggle for equality and civil rights. In our nation's history, our military has often served as an example to the American people of unity and strength, of how a diverse group of people can be motivated even under austere or grim conditions of the battlefield, to come together as equals.

He then took the DOD employees on a short history tour, recounting Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's 1805 journey aided by an African American slave and Sacajawea. He recalled, "They returned east to report back to their commander-in-chief, President Thomas Jefferson. They accomplished their mission to find the best route to the Pacific, and it was an all-hands effort."

At a time of great polarization in the country, with the most instantaneously unpopular and divisive president in recent memory, Mattis stressed unity of purpose. "Military service in America is a touchstone for American patriots of all races, genders, creeds. The men and women of the Department of Defense, military and civilian, reflect the diverse and selfless character of our national defense and have done so long before our nation had reached the level it has reached today in terms of civil rights." This is far from the Trumpian gimmick of decreeing a day of patriotism. This is the real deal — selfless sacrifice, given freely for fellow Americans.

While the president fans the flames of intolerance, Mattis tells the military and civilian employees to be an example to the rest of the country. ("Our armed forces are stronger today because of the perseverance of Dr. King and so many others in this country who have fought for civil rights and equality for all. And we can trace our department's roots

back to an Army patrol in 1805 when we listened to our better angels, and on this day of action, we are inspired to continue being a model for our nation.”)

We hope the White House is listening and watching. Mattis is the only one in the administration so far to act, well, presidential and responsible. He knows we need allies. He knows the intelligence community is vital to our security. And he knows American values must be reinforced and celebrated. He knows our diversity is an asset, not a threat. Too bad Trump doesn’t get any of this.

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