From:	Bulletin Intelligence
To:	DHS@BulletinIntelligence.com
Subject:	The Homeland Security News Briefing for Monday, February 13, 2017
Date:	Monday, February 13, 2017 5:01:08 AM
Attachments:	dhsclips170213.doc

The Homeland Security News Briefing

TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2017 5:00 AM EST

TODAY'S TABLE OF CONTENTS

LEADING DHS NEWS:
+ Trump: Immigration Crackdown Is "Keeping Of My Campaign Promise."
+ Miller: Administration Considering Options On Travel Ban.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT:
+ Continuing Coverage: Cities, States, Universities Respond To Trump's Immigration Order.
+ HSI Anticipates Uptick In Counterfeit Perfume Ahead Of Valentine's Day.
+ Sheriffs Looking For Clarity On Legality Of Detainers.
+ DHS Waiting On Specifics For Compiling Weekly List Of Immigrants Who Commit Crimes.
+ More Immigration Judges Needed To Handle Wave Of New Cases.
+ September Policy Change Leads To Increased Haitian Deportations.
+ CoreCivic Anticipates Fulfilling Increased ICE Detention Needs.
+ Tijuana Police Find Tunnel Along Otay Mesa.
+ Fake ICE Posters Placed Around Penn State Campus.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION:
+ In Mexico, Cuban Migrants Seeking To Enter US In "Limbo."
+ NASA Scientist Detained By CBP Reentering Country.
+ Wired Provides Guide To Protect "Digital Privacy" When Traveling.
+ Cornyn: Texans Not Interested In Border Wall.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY:
+ Travel Disruptions Expected As Winter Storm Targets Northeast US.

US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES:
+ Program Allowing Student Dreamers To Visit Mexico May End Due To DACA Uncertainty.
+ CSMonitor Examines The Refugees Coming Into US Following Lifting Of Travel Ban.
+ Studies Highlight That US Lacks Resources To Confirm Whether Syrian Refugees Are Lying.
+ Venezuela Leads In US Asylum Requests.

IMMIGRATION:
+ Thousands Protest Against Trump, Pena Nieto In Mexico.
+ Most Undocumented Mexicans At Meeting Say They'll Risk Deportation To Stay In US.
+ Many Latin Americans Choosing To Settle In Mexico, Rather Than Continuing On To US.
+ Texas Green-Card Holder Gets Eight Years For Illegal Voting.
+ Miller: "American Workers" Should Be "Given Jobs First."
+ Continuing Coverage: GOP Bill Seeks To Cut Number Of Green Cards Issued.

NATIONAL PROTECTION AND PROGRAMS:
+ Sanford Proposes Privacy Reforms For Real ID.

TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS:

+ Gitmo Commander: No Input Into Trump Policies.
+ “No Evidence” Of Terrorism As Likely Pepper Spray Causes Closure Of Hamburg Airport.
+ FBI JTTF Investigating Dakota Access Pipeline Protesters.
+ Former National Guardsman Sentenced To Prison For Trying To Join ISIL.
+ FBI Asked To Investigate Release Of Pheasants, Possibly By Eco-Terrorists.
+ Slate Analysis: Career Intel Officials Killed Order To Bring Back Black Sites, Enhanced Interrogation.

CYBER NEWS:
+ UK Cyber Official: 188 “High-Level” Cyberattacks In Last Three Months.
+ British Schoolchildren To Receive Cybersecurity Lessons.
+ Cyber Experts: Recent Hacks Part Of International Effort, Resembling 2014 Sony Hack, To Target Global Banks.
+ Microsoft To Grade Commercial Customers’ Security Settings.
+ Florida County School Employees At Risk Of Becoming Data Breach Victims.
+ South Dakota College Offers Cybersecurity Program.
+ Senate Armed Services Cyber Subcommittee Chairman Wants To Learn About Current State Of US Cybersecurity.
+ S&T To Unveil “New Cyber Tools” At RSA Conference.
+ House Homeland Security Committee To Hold Hearing On Cyber Threats.
+ Russia Suspected In Italian Foreign Ministry Hack.
+ “Prolific” Hacker Sentenced In “Rare Win” For Law Enforcement.
+ Cybersecurity Exercise Takes Place In Colorado.
+ House Democrats Call For Probe Of White House Cybersecurity.
+ Google Warning Of State-Sponsored Hackers Targeting Prominent Journalists.

NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS:
+ Report Disputes Russia’s Claims Of Restraint In Syria.
+ Hezbollah Supports Syrian Ceasefire, Peace Talks.
+ Opposition Selects Delegation For Geneva Talks.
+ Tension Mounts Among Shiites In Baghdad After Clashes.
+ Iraqis Battling Oil Well Fires Set By Retreating ISIS Militants.
+ Afghan Official: Joint US-Afghan Raid Killed 22 Civilians.
+ Media Analyses: Netanyahu Will Seek To Reset US Ties During Talks With Trump.
+ Media Analysis: Trump-Trudeau Meeting Comes Amid Questions About Relationship.
+ Media Analyses: North Korean Missile Launch A Challenge To Trump.
+ Steinmeier, A “Critic” Of Trump, Elected Germany’s President.
+ UK Defense Minister Praises Trump’s Efforts To Strengthen NATO.
+ WSJournal Analysis: Trump Moves Toward Center On Foreign Policy.
+ NYTimes Analysis: Foreign Diplomats Hope Haley Speaks For Administration.
+ Peruvian President Asks Trump To Consider Deporting Former Leader.
+ IMF Head: Trump Policies Likely To Be Good For American Economy In The Short Term.
+ Hezbollah Leader Calls Trump An “Idiot.”
+ Moscow Supporting Europe’s Far Right Populists.
+ Bolton Lauds Reports Trump Seeks To Cast Aside New START Treaty.
+ Romanians Continue To Protest Government Corruption.
+ Kashmir Clash Between Indian Troops, Militants Leads To Violent Protests.
+ Somaliland To Allow UAE To Establish Naval Base.
+ WSJournal Analysis: Despite European Unhappiness, IMF Won’t Budge On Greece Bailout.
+ Cambodian Opposition Party Leader Resigns.
+ Swiss Voters Approve Simplified Citizenship Process For Third-Generation Immigrants.
+ Spain’s Far-Left Podemos Party Head Defeats Leadership Challenge.

Leading DHS News:

TRUMP: IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN IS “KEEPING OF MY CAMPAIGN PROMISE.” Widespread coverage of ICE’s enforcement actions last week continued on Sunday into Monday. Coverage nearly

universally highlighted statements by ICE officials and spokespeople that the "enforcement surge" was part of a routine, targeted operation that focused on criminals, and was being planned prior to the Trump Administration, However, that point was somewhat undercut by President Trump's claims on Twitter that the "crackdown" is part of a "campaign promise" to focus on illegal immigration. Coverage also highlighted the sense of fear and panic gripping immigrant communities, and claims by immigrant activists that the arrests signal a new era of increased enforcement and deportation under the Trump Administration.

ABC World News Tonight (2/12, story 4, 2:05, Llamas, 14.63M) reported that President Trump claimed on Twitter on Sunday morning "that the recent crackdown on immigration is keeping a campaign promise. ICE agents have been rounding up hundreds of illegal immigrants in deportation raids across the country." ABC's Ron Claiborne: "In New York City, protesters marching through the cold and ice, demonstrating against that surge in immigration raids. Immigration agents rounding up hundreds of illegal immigrants in the past few days, concentrating, an administration officials say, on violent criminals. The President tweeting today, 'The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!' Also swept up in the latest raids: people with no criminal records."

The Washington Post (2/12, Rucker, 11.43M) reports that Trump "defended the large-scale raids of hundreds of undocumented immigrants...as evidence that he is keeping his campaign promise." The AP (2/12, Galofaro) runs a very negative analysis headlined "Immigrants Wait In Fear After Raids; Trump Takes Credit," focusing on the "fear and confusion" that "have gripped immigrant communities across the nation" since word "spread that federal agents were rounding up hundreds of immigrants." The New York Daily News (2/12, Sandoval, 4.45M) similarly reports that "fear spread through New York's immigrant communities Sunday following a series of federal raids."

The New York Times (2/12, Robbins, Dickerson, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) says that more than 600 people have been arrested nationwide over the past week, but "it remained unclear" whether the ICE actions "were part of continuing operations to round up illegal immigrants with criminal convictions or a ramping-up of deportations by the Trump administration." An ICE spokeswoman said the raids were regular practice. But on Fox News Sunday (2/12, Wallace), presidential adviser Stephen Miller said, "Right now as a result of the President's order, greatly expanded and more vigorous immigration enforcement activities are taking place. It is true that Operation Cross-Check is something that happens every year. But this year we have taken new and greater steps to remove criminal aliens from our communities." On NBC's Meet The Press (2/12, Todd, 157K), Miller said, "Our emphasis is on deporting and removing criminal aliens that pose a threat to public safety." On ABC's This Week (2/12, Stephanopoulos, 6.61M), Miller said, "All over the country right now we are engaging in action to prevent the unthinkable from happening."

USA Today (2/11, Stanglin, 5.28M) reports "hundreds of undocumented immigrants were rounded up this week in a half-dozen states," but ICE said the operation was a routine enforcement "surge" while "acknowledging the bar for deportation has been lowered." ICE "confirmed operations in more than a half-dozen cities and states, including Chicago, Georgia, Los Angeles, New York, South Carolina, North Carolina and Texas." The Independent (UK) (2/11, Roberts, 1.28M) reports immigration activists "claimed the raids extended to Florida, Kansas, Texas and Virginia and that otherwise law-abiding undocumented immigrants were also targeted."

In separate coverage, the AP (2/12) reports ICE disputes claims by immigrant advocacy groups that the latest operations are part of "stepped-up enforcement." ICE "calls the effort no different from enforcement actions carried out in the past." The Dallas Morning News (2/12, 1.12M) reports ICE ERO Los Angeles field office director David Marin said "the agency carries out these operations two or three times a year in his region." He added that the enforcement operation in California was already being planned "before the administration came out with their current executive orders." Fox News Insider (2/12, 3K) reports 161 people were arrested by ICE during a "five-day sweep" in California. Fox News says "approximately 75 percent" of those arrested have criminal histories. Other individuals were arrested when they were "found to be undocumented as other arrests were taking place, said David Marin, director of Enforcement and Removal Operations for ICE in Los Angeles." The Los Angeles Daily News (2/10, 315K) reports 151 of the individuals arrested in California "had felony criminal histories ranging from child sex crimes to

weapons charges to assaults." Among the arrestees was a "Salvadoran national who was an MS-13 gang member arrested in Huntington Park and wanted in his native country for aggravated extortion; a Brazilian national wanted for cocaine trafficking; and an Australian in West Hollywood who was previously convicted of lewd and lascivious acts with a child."

The AP (2/11) reports ICE "says agents arrested fewer than 200 people last week in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia and targeted people in the country illegally and convicted of crimes." Spokesman Bryan Cox "said Saturday that the agency's enforcement activities die[d] down over the weekend, but couldn't say none were being carried out." Cox added that ICE plans to release details of the enforcement sure on Monday that will compare the "Monday-through-Friday arrest total in the three states to other periods."

WCBS-TV New York (2/12, 167K) reports, "Nearly 40 foreign nationals were detained in Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids in New York City, according to a memo released by organization." ICE claimed the arrests were part of "routine, daily targeted operations." According to an ICE memo dated February 11, the operations "targeted public safety threats, such as convicted criminal aliens and gang members, and individuals who have violated our nation's immigration laws, including those who have re-entered the country after being deported and immigration fugitives ordered deported by federal immigration judges." WCBS-TV adds that the raids have "brought criticism from immigration activists in the area." Executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition Steve Choi said, "Shame on ICE for putting New York's immigrant communities – four million strong – in a state of panic." The New York Post (2/12, 3.82M) reports on a leaked memo from ICE that said 40 "foreign nationals" were arrested in New York City during the raids. The memo states the "targeted enforcement operation [was] aimed at immigration fugitives, re-entrants, and at-large criminal aliens." The "vast majority," around 95%, of those arrested "had criminal convictions."

KXTV-TV Sacramento, CA (2/12, 135K) reports 44 Mexican immigrants were detained in Austin, Texas in the past 48 hours, according to the Mexican Consulate of Austin. Rep. Joaquin Castro confirmed the Texas operation in a statement released Friday evening. Castro is quoted from the statement as saying, "I have been informed by ICE that the agency's San Antonio field office has launched a targeted operation in South and Central Texas as part of Operation Cross Check." ICE spokesperson Nina Pruneda released a statement to ABC affiliate KRGV. Pruneda is quoted as saying, "ICE regularly conducts targeted enforcement operations during which additional resources and personnel are dedicated to apprehending deportable foreign nationals. ... The focus of these operations is no different than the routine, targeted arrests carried out by ICE's Fugitive Operations Team on a daily basis."

ABC News (2/12, 3.09M) reports the ACLU "told ABC News today that it plans on creating a 'rapid response team' to combat a potential rise in deportations under the current administration." ACLU senior attorney Lee Gelernt said, "This administration is just getting started and we're anticipating much worse." The New York Daily News (2/12, Elizalde, 4.45M) reports immigrant advocacy groups have been hosting "know your rights" workshops to "educate immigrant communities if such raids occur." The Daily News gives "five steps" for immigrants to follow if they are confronted by ICE agents, including having an attorney on call and utilizing the right to remain silent.

CNN (2/12, Kopan, 29.79M) reports "fear is running high among immigrant communities since President Donald Trump's inauguration." The recent arrests are the "first concerted effort by ICE under the Trump administration to arrest targeted undocumented immigrants for deportation proceedings."

The AP (2/10, Taxin) reported immigrant advocates in Southern California "decried" the arrests, and said they "believe [the arrests] mark a shift in enforcement under the Trump administration." The New York Daily News (2/10, Slattery, 4.45M) reported advocates "took to the streets" to protest the "wave of arrests" by ICE. However, ICE "said the sweeps in New York, Southern California, Chicago and other cities were routine and not part of a promised crackdown vowed by President Trump." Newsday (NY) (2/11, 1.3M) reports protesters "spilled onto Greenwich Village streets...as demonstrators decried the arrests of hundred of undocumented immigrants this past week." The Dallas Morning News (2/10, 1.12M) reported some immigrant activists suggested the raids might be a retaliation for "sanctuary city" policies. An unnamed immigration official said, "Big cities tend to have a lot of illegal immigrants. ... They're going to a

target-rich environment." The New York Daily News (2/13, Sandoval, 4.45M) reports the pews at the St. Roch Catholic Church on Staten Island were "unusually empty" on Sunday as many of the church's immigrant parishioners "were afraid to leave the house." The Baltimore Sun (2/12, 714K) reports protesters in Baltimore "stretched more than a city block marched from the Highlandtown library and wrapped around Patterson Park on Sunday afternoon." Organizers "said they called the rally to protest recent arrests by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Baltimore and Baltimore County."

The Daily Beast (2/11, 1.11M) reports President Trump's "deportation force promise may be coming true" based on the recent "enforcement surge" by ICE. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) "said he thought the enforcement surge may be a response to Trump's recent defeat in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, where a three-judge panel moved unanimously to block enforcement of his travel ban." ICE spokeswoman Virginia Kice "said ICE's enforcement activities are motivated solely by public safety and law enforcement concerns." Salon (2/11, 564K) analyzes the rise of the "deportation machine" under President Obama, and concludes that the recent arrests by ICE are "nothing new." The Arizona Daily Star (2/11, 270K) reports local law enforcement will likely be called upon to help immigration officials to deport targeted people. The Daily Star adds that President Trump has said he "wants to revive the Secure Communities programs that reigned from 2008 to 2014 and counted on deputizing local police as immigration officers."

The Kansas City (MO) Star (2/12, 581K) reports "anxiety among immigrants spiked last week" after the enforcement operations. The Star says the Kansas-Missouri Dream Alliance, "along with lawyers, faith leaders and other community organizations mobilized their efforts to protect anyone who might have been picked up in a sweep."

On CBS' Face The Nation (2/12, Flake, 4.61M), Sen. Jeff Flake, a frequent Trump critic, said, "President Trump promised to go after those who have committed felonies, aggravated felonies, and he is doing so, so that is applauded. ... But obviously, we in Congress need to reform immigration moving ahead. … Those who are in the country like the woman in Arizona who was deported simply because she used documents, fake documents to work, I don't think anybody wants to put her in the same class as aggravated felons who endanger public safety."

Philly (PA) (2/12, Hanna, 942K) reports Gov. Chris Christie, appeared on CNN's State of the Union, "offered no assurances to immigrants in New Jersey who are in the United States illegally, as he defended recent immigration raids under President Trump's administration that have netted some people without violent records." When he was "asked what his message was to New Jersey residents who are in the country illegally," Christie said, "The laws that are in effect right now have to be enforced. ... And that's what's happening right now."

According to the Los Angeles (CA) Times (2/10, Mason, 4.52M), California Senate leader Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles) condemned recent raids by federal immigration officials and called for increased transparency and accountability in a Los Angeles news conference Friday.

In an op-ed for CNN (2/12, Jackson, 29.79M), criminal defense attorney and legal analyst Joey Jackson argues the immigration raids are evidence that a "seismic shift is underway" on matters of immigration. Jackson opines that while the raids are "not new in an of themselves, advocates and others watching these raids unfold are right to worry whether this President is casting a wider net and expanding the objective in ICE enforcement beyond national security." Jackson adds that those "worried about current trends...should take comfort in knowing that immigration courts will serve as a check upon any overreach by ICE."

Also covering the arrests with a local focus are WUSA-TV Washington (2/10, 70K), WPIX-TV New York (2/11, 243K), the Wichita (KS) Eagle (2/11, 265K), NY1-TV New York (2/11, 118K), WGHP-TV Greensboro, NC (2/11, 245K), Los Angeles Weekly (2/10, 84K), WTOC-TV Savannah, GA (2/10, 36K), KEYE-TV Austin, TX (2/10, 32K), the Corpus Christi (TX) Caller-Times (2/10, 131K), the San Francisco Chronicle (2/12, 2.2M), KXAN-TV Austin, TX (2/10, 117K), another report from KXAN-TV Austin, TX (2/12, 117K), Staten Island (NY) Live (2/12, 134K), NJ News (2/12, 952K), Southern California Public Radio (2/10, 54K), the Village Voice (NY) (2/12, 233K), the San Antonio Express-News (2/12, 844K), the Austin (TX) American Statesman (2/13, Subscription Publication, 407K), the Downstream Austin-UT (TX)

Patch (2/10), and the Omaha (NE) World-Herald (2/10, 544K).

NPR (2/11, 1.92M), TIME (2/11, 6.98M), and CNN Newsroom Sunday (2/12) provide additional coverage of the operation.

Bump: Possible Religious Freedom Executive Order Could Impact ICE Enforcement. Philip Bump of the Washington Post (2/12, 11.43M) writes that in 2011, ICE established that it "would not conduct enforcement actions in several enumerated 'sensitive locations': hospitals, schools, the site of a wedding or funeral, during a demonstration or at a place of worship" without "mandated approval from a top ICE official before proceeding (except in the case of an emergency)." Since churches "may act to protect immigrants out of a sense of religious obligation," that could make things "tricky for the Trump administration" under a proposed executive order on religious freedom.

Oregon Mass Transit Company Denies Cooperating With ICE. The Oregonian (2/10, 894K) reported Oregon mass transit company TriMet announced on Friday that it doesn't cooperate with ICE in "responding to apparently false rumors that federal immigration officers were targeting bus riders in Southeast Portland." ICE spokeswoman Lori K. Haley said, "Rumors currently being circulated that the agency is conducting random enforcement actions at Portland-area transportation hubs are completely unfounded. ... The agency is working diligently to address these false reports and we urge the media not to give them credence."

MILLER: ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERING OPTIONS ON TRAVEL BAN. Coverage of presidential adviser Stephen Miller's comments on four Sunday morning shows about the White House's next steps on the travel ban now frozen by a federal court is widespread but essentially straightforward. Reports cover Miller's defense of President Trump's policy as constitutional and examine the Administration's options with little additional analysis or comment – though several Democratic senators also appeared to rebut Miller's arguments and to reiterate their opposition to the policy.

NBC Nightly News (2/12, lead story, 2:30, Snow, 16.61M) said in its lead story that "the White House is considering how to move forward on its immigration policy after losing in court last week." NBC's Kelly O'Donnell: "Defending that travel ban across morning television today, the President's senior policy adviser Stephen Miller lashed out at the courts." Miller: "We have a judiciary that has taken far too much power and become in many cases a supreme branch of government." ABC World News Tonight (2/12, story 3, 2:05, Wright, 14.63M) reported, "The Administration is now turning its attention back to the targeted travel ban, intent on rescuing the policy one way or another, even if that means writing a new, more limited order. ... The Administration doesn't want the courts to have the last word." Miller: "We can pursue further executive actions. All options are on the table. We have equal branches of government in this country. The judiciary is not supreme."

On ABC's This Week (2/12, Stephanopoulos, 6.61M), Miller said, "A district judge in Seattle cannot force the President of the United States to change the laws and our Constitution because of their own personal views. … And we will do whatever we need to do, consistent with the law, to keep this country safe." On CBS' Face The Nation (2/12, Dickerson, 4.61M), Miller said, "I think it has been an important reminder to all Americans we have a judiciary that has taken far too much power and become in many case as supreme branch of government. One unelected judge in Seattle cannot remake laws for the entire country."

On NBC's Meet The Press (2/12, Todd, 157K), Miller said, "The bottom line is we are pursuing every single possible action to keep our country safe from terrorism." On Fox News Sunday (2/12, Wallace), Miller said that the Administration's options include "the possibility of new executive actions designed to prevent terrorist in perpetration of our country. And I want to say something very clearly, this will be very disappointing to the people protesting the President and the people in Congress like Sen. Schumer who has attacked the President for his lawful and necessary action. The President's powers here are beyond question."

The Washington Post (2/12, Rucker, 11.43M) reports that Miller said the Administration is considering appealing "and having an emergency hearing 'en banc,' or before all judges on the court; seeking an

emergency stay at the Supreme Court; taking the case to trial at the district level; or writing a new executive order for Trump to sign that would withstand legal scrutiny." The Post calls Miller's Sunday interviews "unusually combative."

Bloomberg Politics (2/12, Niquette, 201K) reports that Miller said the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals "took power that belongs 'squarely in the hands of the president' in a 'judicial usurpation.'" The Wall Street Journal (2/12, Ballhaus, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) also says that Miller said several options are under consideration, and notes Miller's defense of Trump's actions as constitutional, while the New York Daily News (2/12, Edelman, 4.45M) says Miller's comments "indicated that the administration was actively looking at ways to keep the measure alive."

Newsweek (2/12, Loffredo, 862K) reports on its website that Miller "continued Donald Trump's attacks on the judiciary over his suspended travel ban while declining to indicate what legal strategy the administration will pursue." Reuters (2/12, Chiacu, Harte) says Miller "attacked" the court ruling, and the Los Angeles Times (2/12, King, 4.52M) reports that Miller "renewed the White House attack on what the president and senior aides have characterized as overreach by the courts."

USA Today (2/12, Jackson, 5.28M) says the 31-year-old Miller's "influence and public profile appear to be on the rise," and the Washington Times (2/12, Howell, 272K) reports that the President, "who is known to keep tabs on his aides' TV performances, said he was pleased with Mr. Miller's defense." Trump tweeted, "Congratulations Stephen Miller – on representing me this morning on the various Sunday morning shows. Great job!" The Huffington Post (2/12, Fang, 237K), however, says Miller's appearances went "disastrously," on the travel ban and on other issues. Voice of America (2/12, Bredemeier, 57K) also covers Miller's appearances on its website.

Schumer: Trump Should Throw Travel Ban "In The Trash." On CBS' Face The Nation (2/12, Dickerson, 4.61M), Senate Minority Leader Schumer said Trump should not revise the travel ban executive order, but "he ought to throw it in the trash. I think this executive order is so bad and so poisoned and its genesis is so bad and terrible that he ought to just throw it in the trash can." Politico (2/12, Strauss, 2.46M) says the comment "came in response to a question about the Trump administration looking to introduce a new executive order similar to a travel ban for seven majority-Muslim countries" blocked by the Ninth Circuit.

The New York Post (2/12, Moore, 3.82M) reports that Schumer "went on to call the order 'un-American and unconstitutional.'" Schumer said, "A religious ban just goes against the American brain. We believe in immigrants in this country and we don't believe in a religious test." The Washington Times (2/12, Howell, 272K) also reports on Schumer's remarks.

Other senators were also critical. On NBC's Meet The Press (2/12, Todd, 157K), Sen. Bernie Sanders called Miller's remarks "a shell game," saying, "While there is a whole lot of discussion about the racist, in my view, immigration policies of the Trump Administration which are based on anti-Muslim ideology, which are doing us enormous harm all over the world, something else is going on at the exact same moment is that President Trump is backtracking on every economic promise that he made to the American people when he told workers and senior citizens he was not going to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid."

On Fox News Sunday (2/12, Wallace), Sen. Ben Cardin said, "I've talked to leaders from around the world that tell us that" the travel ban executive order "will be used as a recruitment for terrorist organizations it will put Americans at greater risk traveling abroad, that it adds to self-radicalization." On CNN's State Of The Union (2/12, Tapper, 420K), Sen. Al Franken similarly said, "I agree with Sen. McCain and Sen. Graham that actually this kind of ban makes us less safe and it gives a recruiting tool to ISIS and to other jihadists saying America is anti-Muslim. … I think that Trump and his group are trying to make Americans more afraid. I think that's part of how they got elected is make more people afraid."

However, Sen. Jeff Flake, a Republican who is frequently critical of Trump, said on CBS' Face The Nation (2/12, Dickerson, 4.61M), "I do think it is constitutional. It is not a Muslim ban. ... I think that the message that it sends to our allies abroad and the countries that we need to work with is not a good one."

Page: Trump Running Up Against Realities Of Presidential Power. Susan Page of USA Today (2/12, 5.28M) writes under the headline "Reality Check: After Three Weeks, Trump Hits A Washington Wall" that after "a dizzying flurry of actions" in his first weeks in office, Trump "has begun running smack into constraints mandated by the Constitution and imposed by political reality. Without acknowledging he's being forced to trim his sails, the president is moving to delay some campaign promises and downsize others, steps that sometimes have been overshadowed by a continued stream of the defiant tweets that marked his political rise." Page writes that Tremp is "discovering how the Constitution's structure, federal laws and rival power centers...make leadership in the Oval Office a more complicated calculation than in the corporate suite."

Washington State AG Ferguson Profiled. The AP (2/12, Johnson) profiles Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson, who is in "the vanguard of resistance" against Trump's travel ban. Ferguson said on ABC's This Week, "The Administration, the President, simply refused to recognize what everybody else can recognize. Four federal judges have looked at this case. ... All four have completely and utterly rejected the President's arguments in this case, and we anticipate winning as the case moves forward."

Politico (2/12, Strauss, 2.46M) reports Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson "said Sunday that his state would fight another executive order from President Donald Trump if it violates the Constitution." Ferguson said he recognizes the President's "statutory basis to regulate illegal immigration and his national security responsibilities," but said the executive order violates the Constitution and due process.

Reuters (2/12, Harte) reports Ferguson said he will depose Trump Administration officials to figure out what "truly motivated" the executive order on immigration.

Some Employees Of Long-Established Tech Firms Join Critics Of Ban. The New York Times (2/12, Streitfeld, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that though "the older, stodgier, less glamorous part of the tech universe" has been generally quiet about the ban, not joining in the legal filings or public criticism of its peers, some employees of firms like Cisco, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, and IBM are showing "defiance" and "agitating for an explicit corporate morality."

Policy Puts Hospitals' Selections Of Residents In Turmoil. The Wall Street Journal (2/12, Evans, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) looks at the difficulties hospitals are having in selecting applicants for residencies, noting that in recent years, about 14 percent of residents have come from abroad.

Syrian Refugee Family Now In US. The Los Angeles Times (2/12, King, 4.52M) has a feature on a refugee family who had "survived war's bloody ruination of their Syrian hometown, Homs, endured years of hardscrabble life in Jordan and undergone an exhaustive US vetting process that had lasted more than two years," and are now in the US after the refugee ban initially froze their plans.

WPost: Trump Should Back Abolition Of EB-5 Visa Program. In an editorial, the Washington Post (2/12, 11.43M) says that if President Trump really wants "to show that his immigration policies reflect consistent principles, not his and his family's involvement in the real estate business," he should back a bill sponsored by Sens. Charles Grassley and Dianne Feinstein, the chair and ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, that would abolish the EB-5 visa program, "which began a quarter-century ago as a well-intentioned plan to attract international capital to the United States, but has morphed into a scandal-ridden embarrassment."

Data Shows That 72 Individuals Who Were From Nations Targeted For Vetting Have Been Convicted In "Terrorism-Related" Cases. The Washington Times (2/12, Dinan, 272K) details a new report from "data compiled by the Senate Judiciary Committee and analyzed by the Center for Immigration Studies" that found at least "72 convicted terrorists came from the seven countries President Trump targeted in his extreme vetting executive order." The Time says the convictions "came in terrorism-related investigations," but "some were for relatively minor crimes such as identity fraud."

Immigration and Customs Enforcement:

CONTINUING COVERAGE: CITIES, STATES, UNIVERSITIES RESPOND TO TRUMP'S IMMIGRATION ORDER. The AP (2/11, Elliot Spagat |, Ap) reports US Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly on Friday, while touring the US-Mexico border, told law enforcement officials "that he couldn't define a sanctuary city, which President Donald Trump has targeted for withdrawal of federal funding for refusing to cooperate with immigration authorities." Speaking to San Diego Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman when she asked for a definition, he said, "I don't have a clue." He noted, though, "I promise you we'll work with you and will make no Draconian moves until I fully understand what a given locale might be doing or not doing."

However, The Week (2/11, 1.76M) examines the concept of "sanctuary city," noting that it emerged during the Bush Administration in protest to a program known at the time as "Secure Communities." The article defines "sanctuary cities" as those that "limit local law enforcement cooperation with federal immigration officials." This includes not "permit[ting] police to inquire about a person's immigration status, and some do not turn over undocumented immigrants to federal officials even if they're arrested."

The debate over "sanctuary cities," the Boston Globe (2/10, Lefferts, Hilliard, 1.08M) says, is spreading to more cities and towns that are trying to decide "whether to enact policies aimed at protecting undocumented immigrants."

California could become a "sanctuary state" if Senate Bill 54 is approved, USA Today (2/11, Solis, 5.28M) adds. The bill "aims to severely restrict how much local law enforcement can work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. But the bill would not completely eradicate cooperation between local and federal law enforcement."

"Elected leaders, nonprofit organizations, immigrant advocacy groups and religious leaders" in Alameda County, California have also backed a measure to "set aside $750,000 to match a grant from the San Francisco Foundation to pay for defending and protecting immigrants and refugees in Alameda County," the East Bay (CA) Times (2/10, Moriki, 49K) reports.

In an interview with NPR (2/12, 1.92M), Austin, Texas Mayor Steve Adler said in relation to recent ICE raids conducted across the country targeting undocumented immigrants, "We have a community that is, quite frankly scared." When asked if Austin is a "sanctuary city," he said, "You know, I'm not real sure what a sanctuary city is in today's definitions. Under the president's order, it seems to be that a sanctuary city is a city that violates federal or state law, which we don't. And under that definition, I guess, we would not be a sanctuary city."

Arizona's three public universities have no plans to designate themselves "sanctuary campuses," despite the numerous universities and colleges across the country making the move to do so, the Arizona Daily Star (2/11, Jung, 270K) states. At a Board of Regents meeting on Tuesday, students in the state called for the designation. Board president Eileen Klein, however, said, "We don't want to jeopardize our campuses in any way. ... Yet, at the same time, we've done a good job of making sure that our students know that we're actively working to make sure opportunities are there for them."

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, WHYY-FM Philadelphia (2/10, Colaneri, 30K) says, is "vowing to fight a bill to punish 'sanctuary cities' that is working its way through the Pennsylvania General Assembly." The bill would cut state funding to such jurisdictions, but Kenney has noted Philadelphia "is exploring what 'legal protections' it may have."

Lansing, Michigan City Attorney Jim Smiertka wrote in a memo this week that if the city becomes a "sanctuary" for undocumented immigrants, "it may expose the municipality, City Council members and Police Department to 'possible federal criminal sanctions,'" the Detroit Free Press (2/11, Lacy, 1.01M) reports. He said, "Until the courts resolve the issues noted above, it is recommended here that a formal resolution or policy be delayed until more certainty in the law is achieved."

Arkansas lawmakers, however, have shown some resistance to Trump's immigration rhetoric, the Washington Times (2/11, Demillo, 272K) notes. According to the Times, the House Education Committee

rejected a sanctuary city bill that would cut funding to the state's public colleges and universities, which the piece says splits the state from neighboring red states.

In Columbus, Ohio, the Columbus (OH) Dispatch (2/10, Rouan, 529K) reports the city is not officially a "sanctuary" jurisdiction, "but it is acting like one." The Dispatch says city officials last week said "they would investigate whether Columbus should adopt the sanctuary label after President Donald Trump issued an executive order banning immigrants and refugees from certain countries." Mayor Andrew J. Ginther last week also signed a bill that prohibits the use of city resources for the "purpose of detecting or apprehending persons based on suspected immigration status, unless in response to a court order."

HSI ANTICIPATES UPTICK IN COUNTERFEIT PERFUME AHEAD OF VALENTINE'S DAY. According to CNBC (2/12, Schlesinger, Day, 2.17M), HSI New York assistant special agent in charge Jason Molina warns that authorities predict an increase in counterfeit colognes and perfumes in the lead up to Valentine's Day. Molina warns that the "billions of dollars" in profit from counterfeit products often fund terrorist and criminal organizations and recommends buying products from legitimate sources to avoid purchasing the items.

SHERIFFS LOOKING FOR CLARITY ON LEGALITY OF DETAINERS. PBS NewsHour (2/12, 255K) reports, "Despite tough talk on sanctuary cities from the Trump administration, many sheriffs still fear that they lack the legal right to hold prisoners for possible deportation, even at the request of federal authorities." Sheriffs are still "waiting for courts to clarify the legality of 'detainers,'" according to PBS. Yuma County, Arizona Sheriff Leon Wilmot is quoted as saying, "Sheriffs want to participate but we need to know our legal standing on this. We've been asking for this for years." Wilmot "said sheriffs need a definitive ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court." Oakland County, Michigan Sheriff Michael Bouchard "said larger counties have the same concerns and want a court ruling, action by Congress, or an agreement that federal immigration agents will seek a judge's signature on detainers to make them more legally acceptable."

DHS WAITING ON SPECIFICS FOR COMPILING WEEKLY LIST OF IMMIGRANTS WHO COMMIT CRIMES. Fox News (2/10, 11.07M) reports President Trump's executive order that calls on DHS to "publish a public weekly list of criminal actions committed by people in the U.S. illegally" has drawn both praise and outcry. Rep. Steve King (R-IA) called the order "sunshine on the government." Immigrant advocates "said that Trump is demonizing all illegal immigrants by portraying them as criminals." Fox News says it is still "unclear...whether names will be published along with the crimes committed, and whether the list will include only serious felonies or low-level crimes as well." DHS acting press secretary Gillian M. Christensen said DHS is still waiting on the specifics to compile the list.

MORE IMMIGRATION JUDGES NEEDED TO HANDLE WAVE OF NEW CASES. Public Radio International (2/10, 36K) reports that the budgets for ICE and CBP are almost $20 billion, "an increase of almost $2 billion from 2015." At the end of 2016, around 40,000 people were being held in 637 detention facilities, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) at Syracuse University. TRAC says the number of pending cases at the end of 2016 was over 533,000, and there are only 291 immigration judges to handle the caseload. The article points out that an executive order that President Trump signed on Jan. 25 calls on ICE to hire 10,000 additional immigration officers, and questions if Trump will "increase the capacity of immigration courts to handle existing cases and the new cases that will be generated by this very large and growing law enforcement agency."

SEPTEMBER POLICY CHANGE LEADS TO INCREASED HAITIAN DEPORTATIONS. Reuters (2/10, Brice) reports on the situation of Haitian immigrants since the US restarted deportation flights for Haitians in September 2016 due to the surge in numbers, featuring the story of John Stevens Val, who borrowed $3,000 to travel through 10 countries to reach Arizona, only to be returned to Haiti. An ICE official said 1,513 Haitians were deported between October 2016 and January 16, 2017, while 4,060 were in detention on January 16.

Congresswoman Proposed Bill Shielding Haitian Refugees From Deportation. MSN (2/11, Toure, 7.46M) reports Brooklyn Congresswoman Yvette Clark, who co-chairs the House Caribbean Caucus, has proposed new legislation to shield refugees from deportation "to dangerous homelands." This, the piece

says, “include[s] all Haitian nationals who were in the United States before November 4, 2016.” Clark highlighted the “extreme weather events” in the island nation, saying, “Those needs have increased since Haiti suffered extensive damage during Hurricane Matthew last year, when hundreds of people were killed and thousands of families were displaced. ... Congress must act.”

CORECIVIC ANTICIPATES FULFILLING INCREASED ICE DETENTION NEEDS. The Associated Press (2/10, Jonathan Mattise |, Ap) reports CoreCivic President and CEO Damon Hininger indicated his company is able to provide the detention facilities ICE is likely to need following President Trump’s two executive orders on immigration in a statement last week that also indicates the private prison industry foresees increased profitability under the Administration. Hininger also noted the recent “above average rate of crossings along the Southwest border.”

TIJUANA POLICE FIND TUNNEL ALONG OTAY MESA. The San Diego (CA) Union-Tribune (2/10, Repard, 496K) reports Tijuana police’s discovery of a tunnel on the Mexican side of the border near San Diego’s Otay Mesa did not enter the US, according to Lauren Mack, an ICE spokeswoman. According to KNSD-TV San Diego (2/10, 216K), the police came upon an armed man in a Tijuana parking lot, making the discovery on the day of Secretary Kelly’s visit to the US-Mexico border.

FAKE ICE POSTERS PLACED AROUND PENN STATE CAMPUS. According to the Associated Press (2/12), posters calling for those on Penn State’s campus to “report any and all illegal aliens” are “deeply offensive” and “designed to provoke anger, fear and hate,” said a university statement. ICE officials called the signs “bogus” and denied involvement, according to a Pittsburgh Post-Gazette report.

Customs and Border Protection:

IN MEXICO, CUBAN MIGRANTS SEEKING TO ENTER US IN “LIMBO.” NBC Nightly News (2/12, story 10, 2:30, Snow, 16.61M) reported that an immigration action by former President Obama that has left hundreds of Cuban migrants planning to enter the US via Mexico “in limbo.” NBC (Lightner) added the cause is that the US no longer grants automatic refugee status to any Cuban who sets foot on US soil. Exacerbating the problem is that the expected repeal of “wet foot, dry foot” caused “a rush to the border.”

NASA SCIENTIST DETAINED BY CBP REENTERING COUNTRY. The Verge (2/12, Grush, 1.25M) reports that Sidd Bikkannavar, a US-born employee of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, was detained by CBP and pressured to give agents his phone and access PIN upon returning to the US on a personal trip to Chile. He said his phone “was issued by NASA” and may have “contained sensitive material that wasn’t supposed to be shared.” His phone was returned after it was searched, “but he doesn’t know exactly what information officials might have taken from the device.” The Verge says Bikkannavar’s reentry “should not have raised any flags” because he is a natural-born US citizen and he’s “also enrolled in Global Entry.” Bikkannavar says “he’s still unsure why he was singled out for the electronic search” but said the agents were professional and friendly.

WIRED PROVIDES GUIDE TO PROTECT “DIGITAL PRIVACY” WHEN TRAVELING. Wired (2/12, 3.98M) provides a guide to “preserve...digital privacy while crossing American borders” through the advice of legal and security experts. The advice includes information about locking down devices with encryption, keeping passwords a secret, and creating a “travel kit” with devices that “store the minimum of sensitive data.”

CORNYN: TEXANS NOT INTERESTED IN BORDER WALL. The Hill (2/12, Vladimirov, 1.25M) reports Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) “believes that constructing a physical wall on the U.S.-Mexico border would not rate high among Texans.” He is quoted as saying, “I think people would say, if you are talking about a physical wall, it would rate very low.” Cornyn “said that he agreed with Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly’s view for a ‘layered approach’ that would consist of ‘fencing, technology and boots on the ground.’”

Federal Emergency Management Agency:

TRAVEL DISRUPTIONS EXPECTED AS WINTER STORM TARGETS NORTHEAST US. ABC World News Tonight (2/12, lead story, 2:40, Llamas, 14.63M) reported that millions of people were in the path of a dangerous US storm on Sunday night. The storm, which is expected to cause problems for morning commuters in the Northeast, has already prompted school cancellations in Boston. That city's mayor is "telling residents to prep for up to a foot of snow." NBC Nightly News (2/12, story 5, 1:00, Snow, 16.61M) reported that Northeast residents were "preparing to get belted again by a big winter storm." The storm could cause "widespread travel disruptions." The CBS Weekend News (2/11, story 6, 1:15, Ninan) reported that the storm could bring lots of snow to Boston and Portland, Maine. The story added that heavy rainfall recently "triggered mudslides across California."

US Citizenship and Immigration Services:

PROGRAM ALLOWING STUDENT DREAMERS TO VISIT MEXICO MAY END DUE TO DACA UNCERTAINTY. The San Diego Union-Tribune (2/10, Morrissey, 496K) reports a travel abroad program for Dreamers through the California-Mexico Studies Center may shut down, pending what action Trump takes on DACA. Armando Vazquez-Ramos, a California State University Long Beach professor who launched the program, said the program is "up in the air right now" because, "after these executive actions he's [Trump] ordered, it's unpredictable." He says a great benefit for his program is students who "have come back into the country on advanced parole have a legal entry into the country on record, so if someone like a spouse or younger sibling born in the U.S. petitions for them to get green cards, they don't have to wait outside the U.S. to get approved."

CSMONITOR EXAMINES THE REFUGEES COMING INTO US FOLLOWING LIFTING OF TRAVEL BAN. The Christian Science Monitor (2/12, Kauffman, 387K) examines the refugees being resettled in the US following the restraining order that temporarily blocked President Trump's travel ban. The Monitor reports that Trump tweeted about "a 'dangerous' surge in immigration since his executive order" was blocked and pointed to a 77 percent increase of refugees from the seven countries listed in the order. The Monitor says that the numbers, while accurate, also may be deceiving. The surge, it notes, "reflects not an influx of new refugees, but a backlog of those who had undergone an 18-month to two-year vetting process prior to the Jan. 27 executive order and had already been scheduled to arrive into the United States."

STUDIES HIGHLIGHT THAT US LACKS RESOURCES TO CONFIRM WHETHER SYRIAN REFUGEES ARE LYING. Breitbart (2/12, Klein12, 2.02M) reports on the House Homeland Security Committee's Final Report of the Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel, the contents of which it says received little media attention. The details in the report, Breitbart says, "are newly relevant" in light of the controversy around President Trump's executive order on refugees. The piece also references a Congressional Research Service document warning that "US agencies have limited resources to confirm biographical claims provided by Syrian refugee applicants." While the Obama Administration emphasized the rigorous screening process refugees go through, critics in Congress, the article says, "have noted that such enhancements may not be enough."

VENEZUELA LEADS IN US ASYLUM REQUESTS. The AP (2/12, Joshua Goodman) reports Venezuela is now leading in the number of asylum requests filed in the US "as the country's middle class" has "fled the crashing, oil-dependent economy." According to USCIS data, there were more than 18,000 such requests last year, which the AP says is a 150 percent increase over 2015.

Immigration:

THOUSANDS PROTEST AGAINST TRUMP, PENA NIETO IN MEXICO. Thousands of Mexicans protested against President Trump on Sunday on the streets of Mexico City and other cities. Media coverage says that while protest organizers intended for the demonstrations to focus on Trump, many attendees chose to use the events to speak out against their own president – Enrique Pena Nieto. The Los Angeles Times (2/12, McDonnell, 4.52M) reports the protesters "wav[ed] Mexican flags and signs denouncing" Trump as they marched through Mexico City in "the largest mobilization in the capital to date against" the American President's policies. Protest organizers, according to the Times, "dubbed the

march 'Vibra Mexico' (roughly, Mexican vibe) and mounted an aggressive social media campaign encouraging people to attend."

However, the Washington Post (2/12, Agren, 11.43M) says organizers "envisaged a protest that would condemn Trump's treatment of Mexico, but also demand more of Mexican politicians." The Post says the "balance was proving difficult to maintain" as "hashtags criticizing the Vibra México protest were trending on Twitter" and organizers "were pleading with protesters" to focus on Trump. Many protesters, according to Reuters (2/12, Garcia), "also heaped scorn on their own president" as they criticized him for being "a weak leader who has presided over rampant corruption and violence at home."

Additional coverage is provided by Reuters (2/13) and CNN (2/12, Gillespie, 29.79M).

MOST UNDOCUMENTED MEXICANS AT MEETING SAY THEY'LL RISK DEPORTATION TO STAY IN US. The Wall Street Journal (2/12, De Córdoba, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports that 49 of 50 undocumented Mexican immigrants who attended a Saturday meeting in Phoenix indicated they would rather place themselves at risk of being detained than voluntarily return to Mexico. Mexican officials, according to the Journal, attended the meeting and spoke out against President Trump's policies.

MANY LATIN AMERICANS CHOOSING TO SETTLE IN MEXICO, RATHER THAN CONTINUING ON TO US. The New York Times (2/12, Semple, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that while the US "has long been the dream destination for many Latin American migrants," an increasing number of them are now "putting down roots" in Mexico instead of continuing their travel to the US. The Times says they "have many reasons for staying" in Mexico, including concern that crossing the border into the US "has become increasingly difficult," fear of "the abundance of dangers that lurk" if they travel through Mexico, and a belief that it will be "easier to qualify for some form of legal status" in Mexico than the US. Over the past few weeks, the Times adds, President Trump's policies have also "begun to weigh on some northbound migrants."

TEXAS GREEN-CARD HOLDER GETS EIGHT YEARS FOR ILLEGAL VOTING. The Washington Post (2/11, Wang, 11.43M) reported a permanent US resident living in Texas was sentenced to eight years on felony charges for illegal voting. For casting a ballot as a noncitizen in 2012 and 2014, Rosa Maria Ortega, a "green-card holder who was brought to the United States from Mexico when she was an infant," will likely be deported after she completes her sentence, according to her attorney Clark Birdsall. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who prosecuted the case, said the conviction is a sign the state is cracking down on voter fraud. He said in a statement, "This case shows how serious Texas is about keeping its elections secure, and the outcome sends a message that violators of the state's election law will be prosecuted to the fullest." Birdsall said it is "off the rails" that Ortega, a registered Republican, would get eight years casting two single votes.

PBS (2/12, 1.42M) reportsed Birdsall called President Trump's unsubstantiated claims of reported voter fraud in the 2016 election the "800-pound gorilla" in the jury box. The Hill (2/11, Seipel, 1.25M) reported in its "Briefing Room" blog that Ortega did not vote in the last election.

MILLER: "AMERICAN WORKERS" SHOULD BE "GIVEN JOBS FIRST." On NBC's Meet The Press (2/12, Todd, 157K), presidential adviser Stephen Miller said, "I believe that we should have a program in which American workers are given jobs first. The President campaigned on this and it's an issue [on which] the labor unions agree with us. ... If you have an open job in this country, a US citizen or existing legal permanent resident ought to have the ability to have the first application for that job."

CONTINUING COVERAGE: GOP BILL SEEKS TO CUT NUMBER OF GREEN CARDS ISSUED. The Hill (2/12, Bolton, 1.25M) reports that two of President Trump's strongest Senate allies, Sens. Tom Cotton and David Perdue, "want to dramatically cut the number of green cards issued every year by the United States." They have sponsored the "Raise Act," which the Hill says "would cut legal immigration annually over the next decade from 1.05 million (the annual level measured in 2015), to 539,000." Moreover, the bill "prioritize[s] skilled workers and the spouses and minor children of citizens and legal permanent residents." The Hill says the senators have said such moves would "rebalance" the immigration system.

National Protection and Programs:

SANFORD PROPOSES PRIVACY REFORMS FOR REAL ID. The Washington Examiner (2/13, 400K) reports Rep. Mark Sanford (R-SC) has introduced the REAL ID Privacy Protection Act to "make privacy reforms to the REAL ID Act, including to eliminate document archiving and to allow states to decide against linking their databases nationwide." Sanford is quoted as saying, "Quite simply, it's to clear up deficiencies we see in REAL ID. ... This is about the 10th Amendment. This is about the prerogative of states. Something as simple as issuing a driver's license has historically been the sole prerogative of states, not the federal government."

Terrorism Investigations:

GITMO COMMANDER: NO INPUT INTO TRUMP POLICIES. The Miami Herald (2/12, Rosenberg, 856K) reports Rear Adm. Peter J. Clarke, the commander of the prison at Guantánamo Bay, said he has not been consulted President Trump's policy for the prison, adding, "I don't need to provide my input to policy decisions." While the New York Times obtained a draft executive order authorizing adding ISIL captives to Guantánamo Bay, Clarke said he has not been ordered to prepare to receive new captives. Defense lawyers warn that some detainees are fearful of ISIS. While the prison currently has no female prisoners, there is speculation that they may be among new detainees, and Clarke would not provide clear assurance "that male soldiers would not be supervising female detainee showers."

"NO EVIDENCE" OF TERRORISM AS LIKELY PEPPER SPRAY CAUSES CLOSURE OF HAMBURG AIRPORT. The Washington Post (2/12, Kirchner, 11.43M) reports that in response to 68 people experiencing eye irritation and breathing difficulties from the likely dissemination of pepper spray through the air-conditioning system, German authorities evacuated hundreds and closed Hamburg Airport between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Sunday. Hamburg police spokesman Rene Schönhardt insists there was "no evidence" the incident was part of a terror attack, but officials are investigating to determine how the spray from a lipstick-sized cartridge entered the ventilation system.

FBI JTTF INVESTIGATING DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE PROTESTERS. The Guardian (UK) (2/10, 4.07M) reported that an FBI joint terrorism task force is investigating activists who are protesting against the Dakota Access pipeline. "Multiple officers," The Guardian said, "have attempted to contact at least three people tied to the Standing Rock 'water protector' movement in North Dakota." The nature of the investigation is unknown, but some attorneys believe the FBI's actions are unconstitutional. "The idea that the government would attempt to construe this indigenous-led non-violent movement into some kind of domestic terrorism investigation is unfathomable to me," said civil rights attorney Lauren Regan. "It's outrageous, it's unwarranted ... and it's unconstitutional." In a piece based on The Guardian's coverage, the Daily Caller (2/10, White, 898K) reported that more than 600 arrests have taken place as a result of protests of the pipeline.

FORMER NATIONAL GUARDSMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR TRYING TO JOIN ISIL. The AP (2/10) reported that 27-year-old former National Guardsman Mohamed Jalloh of Sterling, Virginia was sentenced on Friday to 11 years in prison after pleading guilty last October to "attempting to provide material support to" ISIL. The AP said Jalloh admitted that he traveled to Africa and boarded a truck to join ISIL before "bailing out." The charge against Jalloh "originated from an FBI sting operation." The Washington Post (2/10, Weiner, 11.43M) reported that Joseph Flood, a lawyer for Jalloh, blamed his client's actions on heavy drug use and childhood trauma, rather than radical sentiment. Jalloh's attachment to ISIL was "superficial" and he was confused, Flood said. "He's clearly a follower," he added. Jalloh, the Post noted, also claimed to have been in search of a wife when an FBI operative contacted him about pursuing terrorism. "For two months, Flood wrote, the informant 'hounded' Jalloh with 'nearly constant entreaties' to engage in a violent attack," the Post reported. Jalloh was arrested after attempting to buy an assault rifle.

FBI ASKED TO INVESTIGATE RELEASE OF PHEASANTS, POSSIBLY BY ECO-TERRORISTS. The Portland (OR) Tribune (2/12, Rendleman, 104K) reports that the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office in Oregon has asked the FBI to investigate the release of some 50 pheasants from an aviary, purportedly by

eco terrorists. The Animal Liberation Front lauded the release of the animals online, the Tribune reports. The pheasants were valued at approximately $1,000.

SLATE ANALYSIS: CAREER INTEL OFFICIALS KILLED ORDER TO BRING BACK BLACK SITES, ENHANCED INTERROGATION. In an analysis, Slate (2/10, Carter, 1.83M) reported the Trump Administration withdrew language in a draft executive order that "would have resurrected the torture regime that existed immediately after 9/11" after career officials within the CIA and Defense Department rejected the order "from the moment it left the White House." Slate says those officials didn't oppose the order because of their political views. They did so, the article says, because "torture...doesn't work, corrodes their integrity, makes it harder to work with allies, and carries enormous risk for strategic blowback."

Cyber News:

UK CYBER OFFICIAL: 188 "HIGH-LEVEL" CYBERATTACKS IN LAST THREE MONTHS. BBC News (UK) (2/12, 2.39M) reports "Britain's security has been threatened by 188 high-level cyber attacks in the last three months, according to" National Cyber Security Centre chief executive Ciaran Martin, who "told the Sunday Times many of the attacks 'threatened national security.'" Martin "told the newspaper that attempts on government departments were designed to 'extract information on UK government policy on anything from energy to diplomacy to information on a particular sector.'"

The Guardian (UK) (2/12, 4.07M) reports that Martin "told the Sunday Times there had been a 'step change' in Russia's online aggression against the west." Martin is quoted saying, "Part of that step change has been a series of attacks on political institutions, political parties, parliamentary organisations and that's all very well evidenced by our international partners and widely accepted."

The Independent (UK) (2/12, Roberts, 1.28M) reports Martin "warn[ed] that Britain is being hit by 60 'significant' cyber-attacks each month." The Independent adds, "An attempt to disrupt the 2015 general election was thwarted by GCHQ in a cyber attack the security service said was the first of its kind."

BRITISH SCHOOLCHILDREN TO RECEIVE CYBERSECURITY LESSONS. BBC News (UK) (2/11, Symonds, 2.39M) reports, "Schoolchildren in England will be offered lessons in cyber security" beginning in September "in a bid to find the experts of the future to defend the UK from attacks." BBC says, "Classroom and online teaching, 'real-world challenges' and work experience will be made available."

The Independent (UK) (2/11, Dearden, 1.28M) reports, "The new Cyber Schools Programme aims to teach pupils some of the skills they would need to help defend Britain's businesses and institutions against online threats." The Independent adds, "Ministers are making up to £20m available for extracurricular sessions that will see expert instructors drafted in to teach, test and train selected teenagers."

CYBER EXPERTS: RECENT HACKS PART OF INTERNATIONAL EFFORT, RESEMBLING 2014 SONY HACK, TO TARGET GLOBAL BANKS. The Wall Street Journal (2/12, McMillan, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports cybersecurity experts have found evidence which suggests recent attacks on Polish institutions form part of an international effort targeting global financial institutions in several countries, and that the effort shares traits with the 2014 Sony attack. Researchers say the attacks installed code on financial regulatory authorities' websites, then used them to attack the computers of certain financial institutions. The number of targeted banks and the extent of financial losses are unknown.

MICROSOFT TO GRADE COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS' SECURITY SETTINGS. The Wall Street Journal (2/10, Greene, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports Microsoft will begin grading the Office 365 security settings of its commercial customers, in order to strengthen its software and services from frequent hacking attempts. The Journal says Hartford Financial Services Group Inc. plans to use the security score to determine cyberinsurance rates for its customers. Microsoft did not say whether other insurance companies were approached to use the service.

FLORIDA COUNTY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES AT RISK OF BECOMING DATA BREACH VICTIMS. The South Florida Sun Sentinel (2/12, 581K) reports, "Authorities say as many as 7,700 Manatee County school employees are at risk of being victims of a data breach." County school officials "learned earlier this month that two payroll employees of the school district along Florida's Gulf Coast had fallen for an email phishing scam" from a hacker "posing as Superintendent Diana Greene" requesting "all W-2 forms for district employees."

SOUTH DAKOTA COLLEGE OFFERS CYBERSECURITY PROGRAM. The AP (2/12, Raposa) reports on the cybersecurity program at Dakota State University, in which enrollment "has more than doubled in the last five years while other South Dakota colleges struggled to maintain numbers." The AP says, "DSU students learn how to think like hackers in an environment not found in many schools nationwide. ... It's a skill that's seen increasing demand from not only government agencies like the National Security Agency, but also from businesses of all sizes in all industries." The AP goes on to discuss the history of DSU's focus on "computer-related programs."

SENATE ARMED SERVICES CYBER SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WANTS TO LEARN ABOUT CURRENT STATE OF US CYBERSECURITY. Politico (2/10, 2.46M) "Morning Cybersecurity" reports that the "immediate priority" for US Sen. Mike Rounds, the "newly appointed chairman of a freshly created Armed Services cybersecurity-focused subcommittee," is to "figur[e] out the state of play." Rounds is quoted as saying that includes asking the Defense Department for an assessment of "where they see the need for either manpower or additional resources," as well as "assessing where the United States stands in its capabilities compared with 'both bad actors and peer competitors.'"

S&T TO UNVEIL "NEW CYBER TOOLS" AT RSA CONFERENCE. NextGov (2/10, 2K) reports S&T "will be showing off a dozen new cyber tools developed with DHS funds at next week's RSA cybersecurity conference in San Francisco." S&T is quoted describing the tools as "mature cybersecurity technology solutions ready for pilot deployment and commercialization." NextGov provides a synopsis of each technology.

HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE TO HOLD HEARING ON CYBER THREATS. The Hill (2/10, Chalfant, 1.25M) reports, "The House Homeland Security Committee is planning a hearing on cybersecurity threats early next month." The committee "is expected to hold a full hearing on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) cyber defenses and threats to the U.S. on March 1, according to a committee aide." The Hill adds the hearing "will be the committee's first focusing on cybersecurity since the intelligence community concluded that Russia engaged in a cyber and disinformation campaign aimed at influencing the 2016 U.S. presidential election," though it "will not focus on the Russian election hacks but will instead cover the full scope of the threat landscape."

RUSSIA SUSPECTED IN ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HACK. The Guardian (UK) (2/10, 4.07M) reports, "Russia is suspected by Italian officials of being behind a sustained hacking attack against the Italian foreign ministry last year that compromised email communications and lasted for many months before it was detected, according to people familiar with the matter." The Guardian says an Italian government official "confirmed that the attack took place last spring and lasted for more than four months but did not infiltrate an encrypted system used for classified communications." While then-foreign minister Paolo Gentiloni "was not affected by the hack, according to the official," the foreign ministry's "field offices" were affected, though "the government official said sensitive information had not been compromised because it would also have been encrypted."

"PROLIFIC" HACKER SENTENCED IN "RARE WIN" FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT. The AP (2/10) reports that "prolific foreign hacker" Ercan Findikoglu, who was "behind sophisticated cyberattacks that netted an estimated $55 million," was sentenced to eight years in prison Friday in a "rare win for law enforcement officials who have identified, but failed to arrest, hundreds of others like him." The AP describes Findikoglu as "a Russian-speaking Turkish national so skilled with computers that he tracked the sprawling international heist in real-time to make sure a small army of thieves wouldn't cheat him out of his share of the proceeds."

CYBERSECURITY EXERCISE TAKES PLACE IN COLORADO. The Denver Post (2/12, 778K) reports on a cybersecurity training exercise "conducted by Regis University, the state, and the Colorado Army and Air Force National Guard" involving the virtual disabling of a dam. The Post says, "This particular exercise was based on a real cyberattack against a small dam in upstate New York that was conducted by Iran, said Jeremy Lammon, master sergeant in the Air National Guard." DHS representatives were among the attendees, the Post adds.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS CALL FOR PROBE OF WHITE HOUSE CYBERSECURITY. FedScoop (2/10) reports, "Democratic members of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology are calling for a probe into the White House's cybersecurity practices." US Reps. Eddie Bernice Johnson, Dan Lipinski, and Don Beyer "signed and sent a letter to the committee's Republican leadership requesting a hearing on the matter." Their letter is quoted saying, "Given your previous investigations of cybersecurity practices at multiple federal agencies, including the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and Federal Reserve Board, and with respect to former Secretary Clinton's private email server, we trust you will be equally concerned with any and all careless cybersecurity practices of the Trump Administration."

GOOGLE WARNING OF STATE-SPONSORED HACKERS TARGETING PROMINENT JOURNALISTS. Politico (2/10, Lippman, 2.46M) reports that Google "has warned a number of prominent journalists that state-sponsored hackers are attempting to steal their passwords and break into their inboxes, the journalists tell POLITICO." Jonathan Chait of New York Magazine "said he received several messages from Google warning him about an attack from a government-backed hacker starting shortly after the election," and he said "the most recent warning came two to three weeks ago." Julia Ioffe, "who recently started at The Atlantic and has covered Russia for years, said she got warnings as recently as two weeks ago." Politico adds that "some journalists getting the warnings say they suspect the hackers could be Russians looking to find incriminating emails they could leak to embarrass journalists, either by revealing alleged liberal bias or to expose the sausage-making of D.C. journalism."

National Security News:

REPORT DISPUTES RUSSIA'S CLAIMS OF RESTRAINT IN SYRIA. The New York Times (2/12, Gordon, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that while Russian military officials have "vociferously denied that their airstrikes have killed civilians in Syria," but a "new analysis that draws on satellite images, security camera videos, social media and even footage from the Kremlin-backed Russian television network has challenged Moscow's claims." The analysis by the Atlantic Council also "concludes that Syrian forces used chlorine gas on a far greater scale than is commonly believed."

HEZBOLLAH SUPPORTS SYRIAN CEASEFIRE, PEACE TALKS. Reuters (2/12, Francis) reports Hezbollah said Sunday it "strongly supports the Syrian ceasefire agreed on in Kazakhstan and any truce that could lead to a political solution." Leader Hassan Nasrallah said Sunday, "Hezbollah strongly supports, not just the Astana ceasefire, any ceasefire agreed upon in Syria," in order "to prevent bloodshed and pave the way for political solutions."

OPPOSITION SELECTS DELEGATION FOR GENEVA TALKS. Another Reuters (2/12, Al-Khalidi, Perry) report says Syria's main opposition body, the High Negotiation Committee (HNC), on Sunday approved a delegation to take part in Geneva peace talks later this month. The group said in a statement after two-days of meetings in Riyadh, the "21-member negotiating team included members of two dissident alliances with which it has previously been at odds."

TENSION MOUNTS AMONG SHIITES IN BAGHDAD AFTER CLASHES. Reuters (2/12, Majeed, Rasheed) reports tensions between Iraq's Shi'ite leaders "mounted on Sunday as the toll from protests in central Baghdad on Saturday increased to six killed." At least 174 other protesters were injured in clashes that pitted police and followers of cleric Moqtada al-Sadr demanding "an overhaul of a commission that supervises elections, ahead of a provincial poll due in September."

IRAQIS BATTLING OIL WELL FIRES SET BY RETREATING ISIS MILITANTS. The Washington Post (2/12, Holley, 11.43M) reports on the challenges faced by Iraqi oil workers. Outside of Mosul, retreating

ISIS militants set fire to oil wells, and "at least five of the 25 oil well fires left in the militants' wake still rage...forming a second front in the battle for Iraq that is no less dangerous for the proud men involved."

AFGHAN OFFICIAL: JOINT US-AFGHAN RAID KILLED 22 CIVILIANS. The AP (2/12, Khan) reports Helmand presidential envoy Jabar Qahraman and residents of the Sangin district claimed that a joint US-Afghan operation last week led to 22 civilian deaths. A statement by American spokesman CAPT Bill Salvin indicates American forces have "not reached any conclusions" about civilian casualties. According to Reuters (2/12, Smith), a UN statement on Sunday indicated the strikes killed 18 civilians, primarily women and children, and the UN's most recent report shows civilian deaths from American and Afghan airstrikes "dramatically" increasing in 2016.

MEDIA ANALYSES: NETANYAHU WILL SEEK TO RESET US TIES DURING TALKS WITH TRUMP. Bloomberg Politics (2/12, Wainer, 201K) reports that when he visits the White House this week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will try to "recalibrate ties" with the US "after eight years of high-profile clashes" with President Obama. Netanyahu "sees a chance for a warmer relationship" with President Trump. "The overriding goal will be to restore the relationship so that there are no surprises and no daylight," said former Ambassador Michael Oren, now a deputy minister in Netanyahu's office. The New York Times (2/12, Fisher, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports Netanyahu "suggested on Sunday that it was unrealistic to expect their two countries to agree completely on all issues," but insisted that "he was the strongest leader to navigate the relationship – the nation's most important, yet often its trickiest." The Times says Wednesday's meeting is "expected to set the tone for the American-Israeli relationship."

According to Reuters (2/12, Heller), Netanyahu said Sunday he would present "responsible policies" in talks with Trump, "signaling to the Israeli far-right to curb its territorial demands in the occupied West Bank." Said the Israeli leader, "I understand there's great excitement about this meeting (with Trump). But...my primary concern is Israel's security (and) strengthening our solid alliance with the United States." That, he added, "requires responsible policies," without elaborating. The Washington Post (2/12, Booth, 11.43M) reports that during his visit, Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett, leader of the pro-settlement Jewish Home party, pressed Netanyahu "to abandon his tentative commitment to the two-state solution," and not to use the words "Palestinian state."

The Los Angeles Times (2/12, Wilkinson, 4.52M), however, notes that on Friday, Trump told Israel Today that "going forward with settlements" is not a "good thing for peace," a position the Times says "puts him far closer to traditional US policy, and to Obama, than before." Settlements "don't help the [peace] process. I can say that. There is [only] so much land left. And every time you take land for settlements, there is less land left." The Times says the President's remarks "put him at odds with Netanyahu."

Feinstein, Heinrich Call For Continued US Efforts Towards Two-State Solution. In an op-ed in USA Today (2/12, 5.28M), Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Martin Heinrich call for the Administration to "help create the conditions necessary for resuming direct talks between" Israel and the Palestinians, including "a halt to Israeli settlement construction and an end to Palestinian incitement of terror." The senators warn that a two-state solution, which both Democratic and Republican administrations have worked towards, is the only way to stem the violence, provide "true security for Israel," and keep Israel "both majority Jewish and democratic." With "the incitement of violence and terror by Palestinians," Israel expanding settlements, and Trump's nominee to be the ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, expressing "an openly hostile attitude to a two-state solution," Feinstein and Heinrich call for the United States to "continue to play a constructive role, rather than turning a blind eye to actions by either party that undermine the prospects for peace."

MEDIA ANALYSIS: TRUMP-TRUDEAU MEETING COMES AMID QUESTIONS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP. The AP (2/12, Gillies) reports the first in-person meeting between President Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "could be the most important meeting for Canada" with a US leader "in decades." The meeting comes, according to the AP, as "many Canadians fear Trump will enact protectionist measures that could hurt their economy" and are worried that Trump "could be as combative as he was with the leaders of Mexico and Australia." The Wall Street Journal (2/12, Vieira, Mauldin, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) says the meeting likely will provide indications of how Washington

intends to proceed with changes to the economic framework of the continent. Trudeau said last week that both Trump and he were "elected on commitments to strengthen the middle class and support those working hard to join it, and that's what we are going to focus on in these meetings."

NYTimes Analysis: Canada's Conservatives Looking For a Way Forward. The New York Times (2/12, Austen, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that while in many countries the "political right" has "been on the rise lately," Canada's Conservatives "are in the political wilderness" following their 2015 defeat to the Liberals and Trudeau. The Conservatives, according to the Times, also are "lacking a permanent leader to replace" former Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The Times says the Conservatives "are asking" who "can take up our standard, cross swords with a charismatic and popular opponent, and lead us back to power in Parliament?"

MEDIA ANALYSES: NORTH KOREAN MISSILE LAUNCH A CHALLENGE TO TRUMP. Media reports on North Korea's test early Sunday of a mid-range ballistic missile cast the move as a test of the Trump Administration. On NBC Nightly News (2/12, story 2, 0:55, Snow, 16.61M), for example, Kier Simmons said the launch "was a direct and deliberate challenge to the new Administration," and the AP (2/12, Talmadge) too says it was "an implicit challenge" to President Trump.

ABC World News Tonight (2/12, story 2, 1:50, Llamas, 14.63M) noted the test came as Trump hosted Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at Mar-a-Lago. The leaders responded "with a swift joint statement, calling the test launch intolerable and Trump assuring that the US has Japan's back 100 percent." ABC's David Wright noted Sunday's launch was Pyongyang's first missile test since Trump took office, and while it "posed no threat to the US...it was a crucial test of Trump's commitment to the US-Japan security alliance."

The Washington Post (2/12, Wagner, 11.43M) reported early Sunday that Trump's "hastily called news conference" Saturday evening with Abe ended with a "pledge...to stand by Japan '100 percent' in the wake of North Korea's latest ballistic missile launch." The Post noted that the press conference "lasted barely two minutes" and neither leader took questions from reporters. The AP (2/12, Talmadge) said Abe "read a brief statement," and "Trump followed Abe with even fewer words," saying in part: "I just want everybody to understand and fully know that the United States of America stands behind Japan, its great ally, 100 percent."

The New York Times (2/12, Baker, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that in response to North Korea, Trump "reacted with surprising restraint" in "sharp contrast to his response after Iran tested a ballistic missile." The Times says if Pyongyang "was testing the new president, as many analysts believe, then Mr. Trump seemed intent on showing that he would not be baited into a confrontation."

USA Today (2/12, Madhani, 5.28M) reports Trump adviser Stephen Miller told Fox News Sunday (2/12, Wallace) that Trump is sending an "unmistakable signal to North Korea and to the entire world," and is determined to "reinforce and strengthen our vital alliances in the Pacific region as part of our strategy to deter and prevent the increasing hostility that we've seen in recent years from the North Korean regime." On CBS' Face the Nation, Miller said, "Last night was a show of strength. Saying that we stand with our ally, having the two men appear on camera worldwide to all of planet earth was a statement that will be understood very well by North Korea." Reuters (2/12, Chiacu) also reports Miller's comments.

The Wall Street Journal (2/12, A1, Nicholas, Lee, Cheng, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports on its front page that in the wake of Sunday's test, Trump is facing calls for a show of strength toward North Korea. Sen. Cory Gardner urged Trump to "immediately pursue a series of tough measures," including sanctions, military exercises with US allies in the region, and the accelerated deployment of an advanced missile system in South Korea. Sen. Tom Cotton similarly said, "It's time the regime had to face consequences for its behavior."

For its part, Reuters (2/12, Park) reports North Korea hailed the test of a new type medium-to-long-range ballistic missile as successful. State-run media said leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test of the Pukguksong-2. AFP (2/12) reports the missile flew for "about 500 kilometers (310 miles) before falling into the Sea of Japan," according to South Korea's defense ministry. The New York Times (2/13, Choe,

Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports North Korea said the missile "used a high-thrust, solid fuel-powered engine and was fired from a self-propelled missile launching truck," which is "an important stride."

The AP (2/12) reports the US, Japan, and South Korea have requested an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council, which "is expected to take place Monday."

Trump Urged To Pursue Tougher Sanctions. On CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS (2/12, Zakaria, 410K), Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, said, "We're moving towards the situation where either...we get the Chinese on board and we increase the pressure on [North Korea] through sanctions, and the Chinese are in the unique position to do it ,or Mr. Trump is going to have to face a truly fateful decision about whether we're prepared to live with a North Korea with the capability against us or we're going to use military force one way or another to destroy their nuclear missile capabilities."

Also CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS (2/12, Zakaria, 410K), former Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, Anne-Marie Slaughter, said, "There is a tougher policy. We can impose much more personal sanctions that strike at the heart of the actual North Korean regime. China doesn't want us to do that, but it has been effective. The question is whether Trump will use this to get a tougher policy."

CNN's Stetler Criticizes Trump For Tweets About CNN In Wake Of Missile Test. Brian Stelter said on CNN's Reliable Sources (2/12, 301K), "Donald Trump's Twitter feed matters, not because it gives us on TV something to talk about, but because foreign leaders are all monitoring it, all paying very close attention, foreign leaders like Kim Jong-un. On a weekend when the President faces his first real international test with North Korea, on a weekend when he's hosting the Japanese prime minister at Mar-a-Lago, on a weekend when he's supposedly working on his response to the Ninth Circuit, Trump is tweeting about all this: 'While he's on Fake News CNN, Bernie Sanders was cut off for using the term fake news to describe the network. They said technical difficulties.'"

STEINMEIER, A "CRITIC" OF TRUMP, ELECTED GERMANY'S PRESIDENT. A special assembly on Sunday elected former German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier the country's new president. Steinmeier received 931 of the 1,260 votes that came from the lower house of parliament and representatives of Germany's states. Media coverage highlights that Steinmeier has been a critic of President Trump. The New York Times (2/12, Smale, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports – in a story discussing Chancellor Angela Merkel's precarious political situation caused by the rising popularity of the country's right – says Steinmeier's new position "provides stature and an important platform" despite its largely ceremonial role.

Bloomberg News (2/12, Donahue, 2.41M) says Steinmeier – who is a "vocal critic" of Trump and once called him a "hate preacher" – "predicted 'difficulties' in relations with the US" amid a "complete re-ordering of international relations." Steinmeier told broadcaster ZDF after his election, "In the past we were always certain that we would have more difficult negotiating partners in the east." He continued, "Suddenly we're confronted with a situation in which we'll at the very least deal with uncertainty and also difficulties in trans-Atlantic relations." The Washington Post (2/12, 11.43M) reports Steinmeier "shunned political tension or any mention of Trump" in his acceptance speech. However, the Post adds that Steinmeier characterized Germany as an "anchor of hope" in an increasingly uncertain world. Steinmeier said, "We're living in tumultuous times; many in our country feel insecure."

The Wall Street Journal (2/12, Geiger, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports Steinmeier's election was expected as, according to the AP (2/12, Press), the Social Democrat "had the backing" of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's "grand coalition" of center-right and center-left parties. The AP says Steinmeier "has long been one of Germany's most popular politicians." He was the chief of staff of former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and "was a main architect" of Schroeder's economic reforms. The Los Angeles Times (2/12, Kirschbaum, 4.52M) reports Merkel's Christian Democrats "had failed to agree on their own candidate" and "reluctantly threw their weight behind" Steinmeier "after criticizing his uncharacteristically sharp comments about Trump." Reuters (2/12, Rinke) quotes Merkel as saying she has "faith" in Steinmeier "to lead our country in these difficult times."

UK DEFENSE MINISTER PRAISES TRUMP'S EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN NATO. The Wall Street Journal (2/12, Kesling, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports British Defense Minister Michael Fallon said Saturday that US-British defense ties have never been stronger and welcomed President Trump's efforts to strengthen NATO by pushing allies to contribute more to their mutual defense. "The British-American defense partnership is the deepest, strongest defense partnership anywhere in the world," Fallon said.

WSJOURNAL ANALYSIS: TRUMP MOVES TOWARD CENTER ON FOREIGN POLICY. The Wall Street Journal (2/12, Nicholas, Lee, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) under the headline "Donald Trump's Diplomatic Moderation" reports that President Trump seems to be moving towards following a more traditional US foreign policy than was suggested by some of his campaign statements. As an example, the Journal cites Trump's appearance with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe following the North Korean missile launch in which he said the "United States of America stands behind Japan, its great ally, 100%." That is contrasted to campaign suggestions that Japan benefits more than the US from the alliance. Similar shifts towards established policy are described with respect to the "one-China" policy, NATO, and sanctions against Russia over Ukraine. The moves are credited to advice from Defense Secretary Mattis and Secretary of State Tillerson, as well as Trump's meetings with other leaders.

CSMonitor Analysis: With Similarities To FDR, Trump Moving To Reverse His International Legacy. The Christian Science Monitor (2/12, Jonsson, 387K) reports that, among Americans who feel "a mix of Christian apocalyptic thought peppered with a sense of humiliation at the hands of foreigners," there is a "broader sentiment taking root" that looks to President Trump to revise President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "legacy of fearless optimism and world leadership." The Monitor uses examples of those who agree with Trump in Warm Springs, Georgia, where Roosevelt built his "Little White House." The Monitor says that despite their different philosophies, Trump and Roosevelt are similar in how "both took on the courts, both pushed the boundaries executive authority in the name of national security, and both showed an ability to take advantage of emerging media," as well as how much of their bases are "self-described 'commoners; who feel they have a handshake deal with the president."

WSJournal Lauds Trump's Handling Of China, Japan. In an editorial, the Wall Street Journal (2/12, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) lauds President Trump's phone call with China's Xi Jinping and summit with Japan's Shinzo Abe, contrasting the planning and respect with Trump's previous dealing with foreign leaders. The Journal defends Trump's affirmation of the "One China policy," which he previously said was under negotiation, as not capitulating to China's stance on the issue but setting the stage for expanding support for Taiwan. The Journal also welcomes Trump's reversal from casting Japan as a freeloader to expressing support for the country's defense and praise for Abe.

NYTIMES ANALYSIS: FOREIGN DIPLOMATS HOPE HALEY SPEAKS FOR ADMINISTRATION. The New York Times (2/12, Sengupta, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that world diplomats are "figuring out how to deal with President Trump." To do that, "they're counting on his United Nations envoy, Nikki R. Haley." They are, however, said to wonder whether Haley is "speaking for herself, or for the administration?" Still they are "queuing up to see her," and "nearly all described" her "as a natural politician and a refreshing contrast to the president."

PERUVIAN PRESIDENT ASKS TRUMP TO CONSIDER DEPORTING FORMER LEADER. Reuters (2/12, Taj) reports Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski said in a statement that he asked President Trump, by phone, to "consider deporting" ex-president Alejandro Toledo, who is "wanted in connection with a far-reaching graft probe." The issue "is threatening to strain tensions between the United States and Peru." Trump said that they spoke to "reinforce the strong bilateral ties that exist between the United States and Peru," the White House said, but it "did not mention Toledo in a read-out of the conversation."

IMF HEAD: TRUMP POLICIES LIKELY TO BE GOOD FOR AMERICAN ECONOMY IN THE SHORT TERM. The AP (2/12, Gambrell) reports International Monetary Fund head Christine Lagarde, during an event at the World Government Summit, predicted President Trump's planned infrastructure investment and tax changes would produce short-term gains for the American economy, but warned of "a tightening that is going to be difficult on the global economy and for which economies have to prepare."

HEZBOLLAH LEADER CALLS TRUMP AN "IDIOT." The AP (2/12) reports Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said Sunday that "the world will benefit from having an 'idiot' in the White House." Referring to President Trump, Nasrallah said, "We are very optimistic that when an idiot settles in the White House and boasts about his idiocy, this is the beginning of relief for the oppressed around the world."

MOSCOW SUPPORTING EUROPE'S FAR RIGHT POPULISTS. NBC Nightly News (2/12, story 3, 2:15, Snow, 16.61M) reported, "Moscow is exerting more and more political influence in Europe." NBC (Bradley) added that Russia is providing "loans, cooperation, and propaganda" to Europe's increasing vocal far right populists, "even as the US reels from Russian political interference in its own presidential election." In response, the EU "created an agency to counter anti-Europe propaganda."

WPost Touts Russian News Network, Warns Against Political Interference. In an editorial, the Washington Post (2/12, 11.43M), touts Current Time television as a response to Russia's "dark mastery" of soft power in the form of "propaganda, news, social media, cybermischief, deception, leaks and other means to influence hearts and minds." The 24/7 Russian-language television network provides fair reporting without disinformation in Russia and countries. Arguing that "key" to the venture's success is being "deemed credible by audiences that have been fed a steady diet of anti-Americanism in recent years," the Post warns the Administration against making it a propaganda machine. The Post also calls for Congress to make sure this response to Russia's information war, "using real news and straight programming and reflecting the highest and best values of our open society," remains "properly financed and politically unhindered."

BOLTON LAUDS REPORTS TRUMP SEEKS TO CAST ASIDE NEW START TREATY. Former Ambassador John Bolton, in an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal (2/12, Subscription Publication, 6.37M), welcomes reports of President Trump's disdain for the 2010 New START arms-control treaty. Bolton argues that the treaty has been bad for the US and Trump's position indicates a refusal to accede to Vladimir Putin's wishes. Acknowledging concerns that Trump will weaken the sanctions on Russia, Bolton warns this would embolden Russia in its dealings in the Middle East, particularly with Iran, weaken Western Europe's resolve on sanctions, and alarm Central and Eastern Europe. Bolton concludes that Trump has to realize that countries' foreign policies are driven by national interests, not personal chemistry.

ROMANIANS CONTINUE TO PROTEST GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION. Bloomberg Politics (2/12, Timu, 201K) reports that 70,000 people demonstrated throughout Romania on Sunday to demand the cabinet step down, according to local media. Bloomberg Politics notes this 13-day protest is the largest show of unrest since the 1989 ousting of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. According to the Wall Street Journal (2/12, Hinshaw, Subscription Publication, 6.37M), many protesters see National Anticorruption Directorate chief prosecutor Laura Codruta Kövesi as a symbol of change in Romania. The NAD has reportedly increased in authority in recent years, with 2,100 abuse-of-office cases currently under investigation, among them many high-profile politicians. The Journal says that older generations resist the anticorruption measures as reminiscent of communist era rule. The New York Times (2/12, Gillet, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) also reports on the story.

KASHMIR CLASH BETWEEN INDIAN TROOPS, MILITANTS LEADS TO VIOLENT PROTESTS. The New York Times (2/12, Kumar, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports that four militants, two soldiers, and one civilian died in a gun battle between Indian security forces and Hizbul Mujahedeen militants lasting 12 hours into Sunday morning in a Kashmir village. Young people who gathered to grieve the deaths of the militants threw stones at security forces. The troops responded with gunshots and tear gas, resulting in one death and 21 injuries, according to the local hospital superintendent.

SOMALILAND TO ALLOW UAE TO ESTABLISH NAVAL BASE. Somaliland's parliament on Sunday approved the United Arab Emirates' formal application to establish a naval base in the territory's Berbera port town, the AP (2/12, Guled) reports. An official with the Somali breakaway territory explained the UAE intends to use the base to attack Shia Houthi fighters in Yemen and Somaliland President Ahmed Silanyo claimed the measure would create jobs and benefit the territory. Nine parliamentary lawmakers vehemently opposed the "controversial" plan, as did neighboring Ethiopia and Djibouti.

WSJOURNAL ANALYSIS: DESPITE EUROPEAN UNHAPPINESS, IMF WON'T BUDGE ON GREECE BAILOUT. In an analysis, the Wall Street Journal (2/12, Nixon, Subscription Publication, 6.37M) reports that the window for a with the window for a Greek Debt deal quickly closing, European governments and institutions sorely want to resolve the standoff over the next phase of the country's bailout program, but the International Monetary Fund is standing firm against political pressure, refusing to participate because it believes the numbers don't add up. Many Europeans criticize the IMF as being overly pessimistic in its forecasts and assessment of the country's prospects for reform. The Journal concludes that should Europe seek to postpone the Greek bailout issue until after this year's elections, the IMF will not be part of it.

CAMBODIAN OPPOSITION PARTY LEADER RESIGNS. The New York Times (2/12, Wallace, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports Cambodia's "embattled" opposition party leader, Sam Rainsy, abruptly resigned on Saturday in what he described as a "pre-emptive defense move" to save the Cambodia National Rescue Party ahead of June's local elections. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Hun Sen proposed a series of moves through which he could dissolve any party, including the CNRP, headed by someone with a criminal conviction. A number of criminal defamation lawsuits have been filed against Rainsy, a long-lasting, "internationally visible opposition figure," who leads the Cambodian People's Party.

SWISS VOTERS APPROVE SIMPLIFIED CITIZENSHIP PROCESS FOR THIRD-GENERATION IMMIGRANTS. The New York Times (2/12, Cumming-Bruce, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports Swiss voters, in a national referendum on Sunday, approved a government-sponsored measure to simplify and expedite the citizenship approval process for third-generation immigrants under 25-years-old. The measure will not grant automatic citizenship to children of non-citizens born in the nation, but nearly 25,000 people who are the descendants of foreigners with permanent residency status are no longer subjected to the "lengthy and expensive procedure to obtain citizenship." The Times says Sunday's vote "went against the recent tide of right-wing populism and anti-immigrant sentiment in much of Western Europe." The result also, according to the Times, came despite a campaign by the right-wing People's Party "to stoke fears of Muslims infiltrating the country."

SPAIN'S FAR-LEFT PODEMOS PARTY HEAD DEFEATS LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE. The New York Times (2/12, Minder, Subscription Publication, 13.9M) reports Spain's Podemos Party leader Pablo Iglesias "won an unexpectedly clear victory" in a leadership challenge vote on Sunday. The Times says Iglesias' win is expected to bolster his far-left party's "radical" and "anti-institutional hard-line policies." The Times adds the result will also "likely" increase "pressure on the Socialists," which is in the throes of its own "bitter leadership dispute."

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

Copyright 2017 by Bulletin Intelligence LLC Reproduction or redistribution without permission prohibited. Content is drawn from thousands of newspapers, national magazines, national and local television programs, radio broadcasts, social-media platforms and additional forms of open-source data. Sources for Bulletin Intelligence audience-size estimates include Scarborough, GfK MRI, comScore, Nielsen, and the Audit Bureau of Circulation. Services that include Twitter data are governed by Twitters' terms of use. Services that include Factiva content are governed by Factiva's terms of use. The DHS News Briefing is published seven days a week by Bulletin Intelligence, which creates custom briefings for government and corporate leaders. We can be found on the Web at BulletinIntelligence.com, or called at (703) 483-6100.

THE HOMELAND SECURITY NEWS CLIPS

PREPARED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BY BULLETIN INTELLIGENCE WWW.BULLETININTELLIGENCE.COM/DHS

TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2017 5:00 AM EST

TODAY'S EDITION

Leading DHS News

Trump: Raids Targeting Immigrants Are 'the Keeping Of My Campaign Promise' (WP) ... 5
Immigrants Wait In Fear After Raids; Trump Takes Credit (AP) .. 6
NYC Immigrant Communities Shaken After Series Of Federal Raids Led To Around 40 Arrests (NYDN) ... 7
Immigration Agents Arrest 600 People Across US In One Week (NYT) ... 8
Immigrant Communities Fearful After Hundreds Arrested In What Feds Call Routine 'Surge' (USAT) ... 9
Immigration Raids In At Least Six States Following Donald Trump's Order To Deport Illegal Immigrants (INDUK) ... 10
The Latest: Trump Hopes Senate Will Fill More Cabinet Posts (BIHC) ... 11
Trump Praises ICE For Immigration Enforcement (DMN) ... 12
Majority Of 161 People Arrested In Recent ICE Raids Have Criminal Histories (FOXINSIDE) ... 13
ICE Calls 'surge' Of SoCal Immigrant Arrests 'routine' But Some Fear It's The 'new Normal' (LADN) ... 13
Week's Immigration Arrests Totaled Under 200 In NC, SC, GA (WT) ... 15
40 Foreign Nationals Arrested In NYC Area Operations « CBS New York (WCBSTV) ... 15
Dozens Of Immigrants Arrested In NYC During Raids: Leaked Memo (NYPOST) ... 16
ICE Detains Dozens In Austin: What We Know (KXTVTV) ... 16
ACLU Promises 'Rapid Response Team' To Combat Deportations Under Trump (ABCNEWS) ... 18
Know Your Rights: What To Do In Case Immigration Officials Show Up At Your Door (NYDN) ... 19
Democrats, Advocates Question ICE Raids After Hundreds Of Arrests (CNN) ... 19
Immigrant Advocates Decry Spate Of Arrests In LA (AP) ... 21
Federal Immigration Agency Says 'Enforcement Surge' Is Routine, Not Trump-related Amid Protests (NYDN) ... 22
Hundreds Rally In NYC To Protest Against Immigration Raids (NSDY) ... 23
Under Trump Order, Immigration Agents Raid 'Target-rich' Communities In Texas, Elsewhere (DMN) ... 24
NYC Immigrant Communities Shaken After Federal Raids Led To Around 40 Arrests (NYDN) ... 24
Demonstrators At Baltimore's Patterson Park March In Defense Of Immigrants (BSUN) ... 26
Trumps Deportation Force Begins Raids On Undocumented Immigrants (DAYBEST) ... 27
Obama's Lethal Deportation Machine: Trump's Anti-immigration Measures Are Intense, But Nothing New (SALON) ... 28
Steller: Tucson Police To Be Tested By Trump Deportation Plans (AZDLY) ... 31
Amid Rumors Of Trump ICE Immigration Raids At Churches, Support Rolls Into KC (KCSTAR) ... 32
Defending Raids, Christie Gives No Assurances To Undocumented Immigrants In N.J. (PHILLY) ... 33
California Senate Leader Calls On Immigration Officials To Be 'Transparent And Accountable' (LAT) ... 34
We Need To Reality-check Ourselves On Immigration Raids (CNN) ... 34
ICE Arrests Alleged 'Criminal Aliens' In Northern Virginia (WUSATV) ... 35
5 Immigrants From Mexico In Staten Island Arrested In ICE Raids: Source (WPIXTV) ... 35
Kansas Included In National Immigration Crackdown, ICE Says (WICHITA) ... 36
5 Men On Staten Island Detained By ICE Agents This Week, Says Immigrant Advocacy Group (NY1TV) ... 36
About 200 Arrested In ICE Raids In NC, SC, Georgia (WGHPTV) ... 37
160 Arrested In Immigration Raids That Are Stoking Fear (LOSAWEEK) ... 38
Arrests In Metro-Savannah Part Of Region-wide ICE Operation (WTOCTV) ... 39
Consulate: 44 Mexican Nationals Detained In Targeted Arrests (KEYETV) ... 39
Immigration Raids In Central, South Texas Part Of 'Operation Cross Check' (CORPUS) ... 40
ICE Claims Calif. Immigration Raids Were Planned Before Trump Orders (SFC) ... 40
ICE Officer Injured While Making Arrest In Northwest Austin (KXANTV) ... 41
Arrests Made In Separate Overnight Protests Against ICE Operations (KXANTV) ... 41

Mayor De Blasio Says His Office Stands With Undocumented Immigrants (STNISLIV) 41
Christie Defends Trump Immigration Raids Deporting Parents Of Minor U.S. Citizens (NJCOM) 42
Immigration Officials Call 161 Arrests In SoCal Routine In Wake Of Increased Enforcement Fears (SCPR) 42
As Feds Arrest 40 Immigrants, Protesters Demand De Blasio Take Action To Protect New Yorkers (VILVOIC) 44
Firework Set Off Inside Police Car During ICE Protests (AUSTIN) 44
Operation Cross Check: U.S. Congressman Confirms ICE Raids In Austin Part Of Bolstered Enforcement Effort (DSAUSPTCH) 45
Chatter That ICE Raided Omaha Meatpacking Plant Isn't True, Spokesman Says (OMAHA) 45
Federal Immigration Authorities Launch Raids Across The Country : NPR (NPR) 46
Immigration Raids Conducted U.S. Cities: What To Know (TIME) 46
The Looming Conflict Between Trump's Immigration Sweeps And Religious Freedom (WP) 47
TriMet Responds To False Rumors Of Immigration Raids On Buses (OREG) 49
Stephen Miller Says White House Will Fight For Travel Ban, Advances False Voter Fraud Claims (WP) 49
Aide Says Courts Grabbed Power From Trump On Immigration Ban (BLOOMPOL) 50
Trump Is Sifting Options On Immigration Ban, Adviser Says (WSJ) 52
Stephen Miller Says White House Looking At 'all Options' Possible To Keep Trump Travel Ban Alive (NYDN) 52
Trump's Power On Immigration Is 'Beyond Question,' Adviser Says (NSWK) 53
White House Official Attacks Court After Legal Setbacks On Immigration (REU) 54
White House Still Weighing Options On Travel Ban, Looking Toward Restrictions On Work Visas, Top Aide Says (LAT) 54
Aide Stephen Miller Takes Vigorous Trump Defense To TV Sunday Shows (USAT) 54
WH Policy Adviser: Trump 'pursuing All Options' On Travel Ban (WT) 55
Trump Adviser Stephen Miller Disastrously Tries To Defend Trump (HUFFPOST) 56
All Options Considered To Blunt Ruling Thwarting Immigrant Travel Ban (VOA) 56
Schumer: Trump Should Throw Travel Ban 'In The Trash' (POLITICO) 57
Schumer Says Trump Should Throw Travel Ban 'In The Trash' (NYPOST) 57
Schumer On Trump Travel Ban: 'Throw It In Trash' (WT) 58
Reality Check: After Three Weeks, Trump Hits A Washington Wall (USAT) 58
Washington's Top Lawyer Uses Strategic Streak To Fight Trump (AP) 59
Washington State AG: We'll Fight New Executive Order If It 'Violates The Constitution' (POLITICO) 60
Trump Administration Officials May Be Deposed Over Immigration Order (REU) 61
Activism Hits Even The Less Flashy Tech Companies (NYT) 61
Hospitals Weigh Difficult Choice Amid Travel-Ban Uncertainty (WSJ) 62
An Interrupted Journey Ends In A New Life In The U.S. For Syrian Refugee Family (LAT) 63
An Immigration Policy Worth Ending (WP) 65
72 Convicted In U.S. Terror Cases Came From Nations Targeted For Vetting (WT) 65

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Homeland Security Head Is Pressed To Define 'sanctuary City' (WP) 66
America's Showdown Over Sanctuary Cities (THEWEEK) 67
Debate Heats Up As Sanctuary Movement Spreads (BOSGLOBE) 68
California Could Become A Sanctuary State. What That Means (USAT) 70
Alameda County Takes Aim At Trump's Immigration Stance (EASTBAY) 71
'Sanctuary City' Mayor Speaks After Nationwide Immigration Raids : NPR (NPR) 72
Arizona's Public Universities Will Not Consider Becoming 'Sanctuaries' (AZDLY) 73
Lansing City Attorney Warns Against Sanctuary Status (FREEP) 74
Analysis: Pro-Trump Arkansas Resists Anti-sanctuary Bill (WT) 75
Columbus Has Traits Of Sanctuary City, But Officially It's Not (COLDIS) 76
Buyers Beware! Counterfeiters Trying To Cash In On Valentine's Day (CNBC) 76
Sheriffs Still Looking For Clarity On Deportation (NEWSHR) 77
Trump Order For Publishing Weekly List Of Immigrant Crimes Draws Praise And Outcry (FOX) 79
After Daring Voyage To U.S., Haitians' Dreams End In Deportation (REU) 80
Brooklyn Congresswoman Moves To Shield Haitian Refugees From Deportation After Trump Order (MSN) 80
Private Prison Firm Sees Trump Immigration Push Opportunity (WP) 80
Tunnel Found In Tijuana Near Border Along Otay Mesa (SDUT) 81
Border Tunnel Discovered On Day Of DHS Sec Kelly's Visit (KNSDTV) 81
Penn State Calls Immigration Posters 'Deeply Offensive' (PHILLY) 82

Customs and Border Protection

A US-born NASA Scientist Was Detained At The Border Until He Unlocked His Phone (THEVERGE) 82
How To Get Past Customs Without Giving Up Your Digital Privacy (WIRED) 84
GOP Senator: Physical Border Wall 'Would Rate Very Low' Among Texans (HILL) 85

FOIA CBP 000728

US Citizenship and Immigration Services

Dreamers Visit Mexico Under Program That May Come To End Under Trump (SDUT) ... 86
Federal Studies: Intel Agencies Lack Data To Assess Whether Syrian Refugees Are Lying (BREITBART) ... 87
Venezuela Now Leads US Asylum Requests As Crisis Deepens (WP) ... 88

Immigration

Thousands March Against Trump In Mexico City: 'Pay For Your Own Wall!' (LAT) ... 88
Mexicans March To Protest Trump — But Also Their Own Leaders And Politicians (WP) ... 89
Marchers Across Mexico Vent Anger Over Trump, And Their Own President (REU) ... 90
Mexico's Lopez Obrador Blasts Trump's Immigration Policies At LA Rally (REU) ... 90
Mexicans March Against Trump: 'Bad Hombre For The Whole World' (CNN) ... 90
Mexican Migrants Signal They Prefer Detention To Deportation (WSJ) ... 91
Migrating North, But To Mexico, Not The US (NYT) ... 91
Republican Green-card Holder Who Voted Illegally In Texas Gets 8 Years In Prison (WP) ... 93
Green Card Holder Who Voted Illegally Could Face Deportation (PBS) ... 94
Green-card Holder Who Voted Illegally In Texas Sentenced To 8 Years In Prison (HILL) ... 95
GOP Shifting On Immigration (HILL) ... 95

National Protection and Programs

Rep. Mark Sanford Pushes For REAL ID Reform As Privacy Issues Loom (WASHEX) ... 96

Terrorism Investigations

Guantánamo Prison Commander Says He Has No Say In Trump Policy (MH) ... 97
Hamburg Airport Briefly Closed After Dozens Injured By Irritant Gas (WP) ... 98
Revealed: FBI Terrorism Taskforce Investigating Standing Rock Activists (GUARD) ... 98
FBI's Terrorism Unit Opens Up Investigation Against Dakota Pipeline Opponents (CALLER) ... 99
Ex-Guardsman Gets 11 Years For Islamic State Group Support (AP) ... 100
He Said He Was Looking For A Wife. He Ended Up Trying To Aid A Terrorist Attack. (WP) ... 101
Oregon Local News – FBI, CCSO Investigate 'Eco-terrorists' At Beavercreek Farm (PORTRIB) ... 102
Meet The People Who Helped Quash Trump's Plans To Reinstitute Torture. (SLATEMAG) ... 102

Cyber News

UK Targeted By 'Dozens' Of Serious Cyber Attacks Each Month (BBC) ... 103
UK Hit By 188 High-level Cyber-attacks In Three Months (GUARD) ... 104
Russian Hackers Pose Increasing Threat To UK's National Security, GCHQ Chief Warns (INDUK) ... 104
Cyber Security Lessons Offered To Schools In England (BBC) 105
British Teenagers To Be Taught 'Cyber Curriculum' To Defend UK Against Threat Of Hacking Attacks (INDUK) ... 106
Cyberattacks On International Banks Show Links To Hackers Who Hit Sony (WSJ) ... 106
Microsoft To Rate Corporate Cybersecurity (WSJ) ... 107
Manatee County Schools Faces Data Breach Affecting Thousands (FLSUNSEN) ... 107
Hacking Increase Sparks More Cyber Security Programs (WT) 107
Catching Up With Sen. Mike Rounds, New Cyber Subpanel Chairman (POLITICO) ... 108
Homeland Security To Unveil 12 New Tools At Cyber Conference (NEXTGOV) ... 110
House Homeland Security Committee Plans Cyber Hearing Next Month (HILL) ... 111
Russia Suspected Over Hacking Attack On Italian Foreign Ministry (GUARD) ... 111
Foreign Hacker Gets 8 Years In $55M US Scam Case (PHILLY) ... 112
Regis Cybersecurity Exercise Shows Trainees What A "malicious Attack" Can Do (DENP) ... 113
Democrats Call For Probe Into White House's Cybersecurity Practices (FEDSCOOP) ... 113
State-sponsored Hackers Targeting Prominent Journalists, Google Warns (POLITICO) ... 113

National Security News

Report Rebuts Russia's Claims Of Restraint In Syrian Bombing Campaign (NYT) ... 114
Hezbollah Supports Syria Ceasefire And Political Talks (REU) 115
Syrian Opposition Picks Delegation To Geneva Talks (REU) .. 115
Inter-Shi'ite Tension Mounts In Baghdad After Clashes (REU) 115
Fireballs And Booby Traps: On The Front Lines With The Oil Workers Battling ISIS (WP) ... 116
Afghan Official Says Joint Raid Killed 22 Civilians (AP) ... 117
Coalition Air Strikes Killed 18 Afghan Civilians, U.N. Says (REU) 117
Netanyahu Heads To US Seeking To Reset Ties After Obama Years (BLOOMPOL) ... 117
Netanyahu's Meeting With Trump To Set Tone For US-Israel Relations (NYT) ... 118
Netanyahu Pledges To Promote 'Responsible Policies' At Trump Meeting (REU) ... 119
Netanyahu Is Urged Not To Use The Words "Palestinian State"When He Visits Trump (WP) ... 119
Netanyahu May Seek To Reset U.S.-Israel Relations In Meeting With Trump (LAT) ... 120
Two-state Solution Crucial For Mideast Peace: Sens. Feinstein And Heinrich (USAT) ... 122
Trump And Trudeau Meet Face To Face For The First Time (AP) ... 123
Trump-Trudeau Meeting Will Preview Trade, Border Issues (WSJ) ... 123

FOIA CBP 000729

Canada's Conservatives Seek A Champion, And Redemption (NYT) ... 123
North Korea Test-fires Missile, Apparently Challenging Trump (AP) ... 125
A Hastily Called News Conference Caps A Surreal Day For Trump In South Florida (WP) ... 126
Trump Responds To North Korean Missile Launch With Uncharacteristic Restraint (NYT) ... 127
North Korea Tests Trump's Resolve With Latest Missile Launch (USAT) ... 128
U.S. Will Strengthen Pacific Allies Against North Korea Hostility: Official (REU) ... 129
Trump Faces Test Over North Korea Missile (WSJ) ... 129
North Korea Says Test Launch Of New Missile Type A Success (REU) ... 129
N. Korea Says Successfully Tested New Ballistic Missile (AFP) 129
North Korea Claims Progress On Long-Range Goal With Missile Test (NYT) ... 130
The Latest: UN Security Council To Meet On North Korea (AP) 131
Angela Merkel, Squeezed By Far Right, Now Faces A Rising Left, Too (NYT) ... 132
Germany's New Trump-Critic President Sees Stormy U.S. Ties Ahead (BLOOM) ... 134
Germany Picks Anti-Trump President As Trans-Atlantic Bonds Fray (WP) ... 134
Frank-Walter Steinmeier Is Elected As Germany's President (WSJ) ... 135
Germany Picks Frank-Walter Steinmeier To Be President (AP) 135
The Man Just Elected As Germany's Next President Once Called Trump A 'Hate Preacher' (LAT) ... 136
Steinmeier Elected German President (REU) ... 137
U.K. Defense Chief, Following Prime Minister, Praises Trump Approach (WSJ) ... 137
Donald Trump's Diplomatic Moderation (WSJ) ... 137
At FDR's 'Little White House,' A Portrait Of Trump's Starkly Different Worldview (CSM) ... 137
Trump's Winning Asia Diplomacy (WSJ) ... 138
World's Diplomats, Seeking A Bridge To Trump, Eye Haley (NYT) ... 138
Peru President Asks Trump To Consider Deporting Wanted Ex-leader (REU) ... 140
IMF Head: Trump Good For US Economy For Now As Trouble Looms (AP) ... 140
Hezbollah Leader Says 'Idiot' Trump Makes Him Optimistic (AP) 141
A Way To Get Real News To Russia (WP) ... 141
Trump's New Start With Russia May Prove Better Than Obama's (WSJ) ... 141
Romanians Step Up Protests Again To Urge Government To Quit (BLOOMPOL) ... 141
Corruption Crusader Stirs Romania (WSJ) ... 142
Anger And Mistrust Fuel Unabated Protests In Romania (NYT) 142
After Gun Battle In Kashmir, Protests Turn Violent (NYT) ... 143
Somaliland Agrees To UAE Military Base In Northern Port (AP) 143
IMF's Stand On Greek Bailout Unnerves Europe (WSJ) ... 144
Top Opposition Leader In Cambodia Resigns As Election Nears (NYT) ... 144
Switzerland Votes To Ease Citizenship For 3rd-Generation Immigrants (NYT) ... 145
Head Of Spain's Far-Left Party Survives Leadership Challenge (NYT) ... 146

National News

Republicans, Aiming To Kill Health Law, Also Work To Shore It Up (NYT) ... 146
After Angry Demonstration In Utah, Chaffetz Returns To More Wrath In D.C. (WP) ... 147
White House Declines To Publicly Defend Embattled Flynn (AP) 149
As Flynn Falls Under Growing Pressure Over Russia Contacts, Trump Remains Silent (WP) ... 151
Democrats Press For Probe Of Security Adviser's Talks With Russians (WSJ) ... 152
White House Is Keeping Doubts Alive About The Future Of National Security Advisor Michael Flynn (LAT) ... 152
Trump's National Security Adviser Flynn Trying To Survive Crisis (REU) ... 153
Turmoil At The National Security Council, From The Top Down (NYT) ... 153
Democrat Cummings Says Trump Adviser Must Explain Russia Calls (WT) ... 155
Trump Friend Says Priebus Is 'In Way Over His Head' (WP) .. 155
Trump Friend Suggests Reince Priebus Is In Over His Head (NYT) ... 156
Trump Friend Who Slammed Priebus Now Says His Plans Are 'Impressive' (HILL) ... 156
Trump Reviews Top White House Staff After Tumultuous Start (POLITICO) ... 157
Trump Aide Says Endorsement Of Ivanka's Brand Was 'Light-hearted' (REU) ... 158
Kellyanne Conway's Dangerous Game (POLITICO) ... 158
Steven Mnuchin Poised To Secure Confirmation As Treasury Secretary (WSJ) ... 160
Fashion's Betsy DeVos Connection (NYT) ... 160
How Bannon's Navy Service During The Iran Hostage Crisis Shaped His Views (WP) ... 161
Christie: No Plans To Join Trump Administration When Term Is Up (WT) ... 163
White House Backs Up Trump's Unproven Voter Fraud Allegations (NYPOST) ... 163
Top Trump Aide Again Asserts Widespread Vote Fraud, Cites No Evidence (LAT) ... 164
Trump Adviser Repeats Unsubstantiated Vote Fraud Assertions (WSJ) ... 165
Stephen Miller's Bushels Of Pinocchios For False Voter-fraud Claims (WP) ... 165
Sen. Al Franken Admits Some Senate Republicans Have Concerns About President Trump's Mental Health (NYDN) 167
The Latest: Senator Says Trump's Mental Health Is Questioned (AP) ... 167

FOIA CBP 000730

Franken: GOP Colleagues Question Trump's Mental Health (HILL) ... 168
Franken Dings Trump Over Warren Insult (POLITICO) ... 168
Bernie Sanders Calls Trump A 'Pathological Liar'; Al Franken Says 'A Few' Republicans Think Trump Is Mentally Ill (WP) ... 169
Donald Trump Rages About A Mark Cuban POTUS Run (NYPOST) ... 169
Trump Tweets That Mark Cuban Is Not Smart Enough To Be President (BOSGLOBE) ... 170
In The Face Of Weighty Problems, Trump Focuses On Squabbles (NYT) ... 171
Attorney General Signals Pullback From Obama Initiative On Transgender Bathrooms (WSJ) ... 173
Without Fanfare, Trump Reverses Obama Order On Justice Department Succession (USAT) ... 173
Trump Undertakes Most Ambitious Regulatory Rollback Since Reagan (WP) ... 173
Supreme Court Nominee Has Defended Free Speech, Religion (AP) ... 175
Supreme Court Nominee Neil Gorsuch Scales Back Description Of Pro Bono Work At Harvard (WSJ) ... 176
Education Dept. Torched For Misspelling W.E.B. Du Bois In Tweet (USAT) ... 176
Social Media Mocks Education Dept For Misspelled Tweets (AP) ... 177
DeVos's Education Department Misspells Name Of NAACP Co-founder In Tweet — And The Apology Had A Mistake (WP) ... 177
Education Department Misspells Name Of Civil Rights Icon (NYPOST) ... 178
How Both Democrats And Republicans Blindsided Our Best Low-income Students (WP) ... 178
Army To Spend $300 Million On Bonuses And Ads To Get 6,000 More Recruits (USAT) ... 179
'Significant Uncertainty' About Fiscal Policy Under Trump: Fed's Fischer (REU) ... 180
Investors Have Second Thoughts About Trump Trade (WSJ) . 180
'Are We Safe Yet?' The Answer's Not So Simple. (WP) ... 180
Are We Safe Yet? | Foreign Affairs (FORAFF) ... 181
D.C. Region Braces For Shock From Trump Effect On Spending, Federal Workforce (WP) ... 182
Trump Takes On Tech Industry In Early Policy Moves (WSJ) . 183
Speed Limits On Trump's Infrastructure Drive: Federal Laws, Rare Species And Nimbys (WSJ) ... 183
The Grammys Red Carpet Gets Political With 'Make America Great Again' Dress (USAT) ... 184
Singer Wears Trump-inspired Dress To Grammys (PGSIX) ... 184
Katy Perry Shows Solidarity With Elizabeth Warren In Grammys Performance (BOSGLOBE) ... 184
Trump Criticized Obama For Golfing. Now He Spends Weekends On The Links. (NYT) ... 184
Sanders: Protests On Left Aren't Like The Tea Party (POLITICO) ... 185
'We're Not An Authoritarian Country,' Patrick Kennedy Says About Trump (AP) ... 186
Why Is Chuck Grassley Tweeting At Donald Trump? (WP) ... 186
ACLU Is Seeing A Trump-era Surge In Members And Donations (AP) ... 187
From Protests To 'Pussy Hats,' Trump Resistance Brews Online (AP) ... 188
Gillibrand Says She Won't Be Running Against Trump In 2020 (NYPOST) ... 189
Evan Falchuk, Former Independent Candidate, Switches To Democratic Party (BOSGLOBE) ... 190
G.O.P. Lawmakers Like What They See In Trump. They Just Have To Squint. (NYT) ... 191
In Contrast With Trump, Governors Pitch Optimism (HILL) ... 192
Democrats At Retreat Seem To Relish A Shifting Of Responsibility (NYT) ... 194
Centrist Senators' Clout Rises In Divided Chamber (USAT) ... 195
Bernie Sanders Cries Foul Over Canceled Town Hall Meeting In West Virginia (WP) ... 196
Former Presidential Candidates Eye Senate Comebacks (HILL) 197
Their Camp Turning Into A Pit Of Mud, Dakota Pipeline Protesters Face The Inevitable (WP) ... 198
Pentagon Launches Effort To Solve A Baffling WWII Mystery (AP) ... 200
Spillway On California Dam In Danger Of Collapse, Evacuations Ordered (REU) ... 200
Evacuation Ordered As Oroville Dam's Auxiliary Spillway Predicted To Fail (WSJ) ... 201
Yale Renames Calhoun College Because Of Historic Ties To White Supremacy And Slavery (WP) ... 201
The Supreme Court's Controversial Ruling On An Executive Order (WP) ... 203
Trump's Harder Line On Mexico Casts Shadow On Long-Term Growth Picture (WSJ) ... 205
Denim Dilemma (WSJ) ... 205
Here's One Industry Where The U.S. Is Already Catching China—Fertilizers (WSJ) ... 205

LEADING DHS NEWS

Trump: Raids Targeting Immigrants Are 'the Keeping Of My Campaign Promise'

By Philip Rucker
Washington Post, February 12, 2017

President Trump on Sunday morning defended the large-scale raids of hundreds of undocumented immigrants by federal authorities over the past week as evidence that he is keeping his campaign promise.

Since Trump signed an executive order Jan. 25 cracking down on illegal immigrants, federal officials in recent days targeted immigrants — many of them known criminals

FOIA CBP 000731

— in homes and workplaces in half a dozen states, detaining hundreds of people.

Trump tweeted Sunday morning, "The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

In another tweet sent a few minutes later, Trump decried the number of refugees from majority-Muslim nations that have been allowed into the United States since the federal courts halted enforcement of his travel ban.

Trump tweeted, "72% of refugees admitted into U.S. (2/3-2/11) during COURT BREAKDOWN are from 7 countries: SYRIA, IRAQ, SOMALIA, IRAN, SUDAN, LIBYA & YEMEN."

Trump appeared to be referencing data from the State Department showing that just over 1,000 of the approximately 1,400 refugees admitted Feb. 4-10 were from the seven countries included in the travel ban.

Carol Morello contributed to this report.

Immigrants Wait In Fear After Raids; Trump Takes Credit

By Claire Galofaro

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

Pastor Fred Morris looked out over his congregation Sunday as news ricocheted around the world that American authorities were rounding up immigrants in an enforcement surge that President Donald Trump promised on the campaign trail.

Parishioners did not smile as on any other Sunday morning. Their eyes darted around the room. They stared down at their feet. Others didn't attend at all.

"There is a dreadful sense of fear. It's more than palpable. It's radiating. People are terrified," said Morris, whose United Methodist mission is in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood of Los Angeles. "They were just sitting there in stunned silence."

For days, fear and confusion have gripped immigrant communities across the nation after word spread that federal agents were rounding up hundreds of immigrants in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, New York, California, Illinois and Texas. The scope of the operation remained unclear on Sunday.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency said the efforts were "routine" and no different than the targeted arrests carried out under former President Barack Obama.

But Trump took to Twitter to claim credit.

"The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise," he wrote early Sunday. "Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

On the Sunday morning talk shows, the president's representatives said the enforcement was a result of Trump's policies.

White House policy adviser Stephen Miller told "Fox News Sunday" that the administration had "taken new and greater steps to remove criminal aliens" who pose a threat to public safety.

Among those arrested were a Salvadoran gang member wanted in his home country and a Brazilian drug trafficker, officials said.

Nearly 200 people were arrested in the Carolinas and Georgia. More than 150 more were rounded up in and around Los Angeles, and around 40 were arrested in New York City and surrounding areas, ICE confirmed.

A decade ago, immigration officers searching for specific individuals would often arrest others encountered along the way, a practice that drew criticism from advocates. Under the Obama administration, agents focused more narrowly on specific individuals. ICE now appears to be reverting back to old policies.

Immigrant rights groups cite the case of Manuel Mosqueda, a 50-year-old house painter, as an example of how they believe ICE agents in the new administration are going too far.

During last week's enforcement operation, ICE agents showed up at Mosqueda's home looking for someone else. While there, they inquired about Mosqueda, learned he was here illegally and put him on a bus to Mexico.

Karla Navarrete, a lawyer for the advocacy group CHIRLA, said she sought to stop Mosqueda from being placed on the bus and was told by ICE that things had changed. She said another lawyer filed federal court papers and got a judge to stop the deportation. The bus turned around, and Mosqueda is now jailed in Southern California, waiting to learn his fate.

Agents who went to a Virginia apartment Thursday looking for a wanted man picked up everyone else in the apartment too, except for one women with a baby in her arms, said Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg, legal director for Legal Aid Justice Center's immigrant advocacy program in northern Virginia.

For supporters of Trump's immigration policies, the new and broader approach was welcome news.

"The main thing is to send the message that the immigration laws are actually being enforced again. That in itself is an important message that's got to be sent," said Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, a think tank that advocates for tighter controls on immigration.

Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly said the agency is simply enforcing federal law.

FOIA CBP 000732

But immigration advocates said many immigrants are afraid to send their children to school and afraid to go to church or work or the hospital.

Panicked rumors spread as quickly as the truth.

"Every time so much as a white guy with a clipboard is walking around, everyone runs into their apartments and locks the doors," he said.

One case that sowed widespread fear was that of Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, a mother of two in Phoenix who was arrested nearly a decade ago for using a false ID to get a job as a janitor. She pleaded guilty to a felony charge, but the government declined to deport her. On Wednesday, she showed up at the ICE building in Phoenix for a scheduled check-in with immigration officers and was deported to Mexico.

Advocates and immigration attorney across the country scrambled to hold seminars and conference calls teaching people their rights.

At his Sunday morning service, Morris handed out a double-sided sheet listing congregants' civil rights. The first read "don't open your door." He is planning a community meeting for Monday night with lawyers, immigration advocates and consuls from Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala.

He has another plan, too. He started organizing a phone chain. If he hears about a raid on a home in his community, he will call five people, who will call five people and so on. They will all show up, stand on the sidewalk and chant: "ICE go home." He hopes "public shaming" will prove to be a deterrent.

"The only weapon we have is solidarity," he said. "They are deporting people who may be undocumented, but they do have rights under our laws."

Associated Press Writer Josh Hoffner in Phoenix contributed to this report.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

NYC Immigrant Communities Shaken After Series Of Federal Raids Led To Around 40 Arrests

By Edgar Sandoval, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, February 12, 2017

Fear spread through New York's immigrant communities Sunday following a series of federal raids that led to the arrest of around 40 people.

On Staten Island, where advocates said five people were arrested over the weekend, a Mexican restaurant, La Catracha, was unusually empty.

"Usually the place is filled with families. But today is empty. No one is leaving their homes. They are afraid," said Diana Matute, 40, who owns the restaurant in Port Richmond.

"If this keeps up I may have to close. I have to pay rent and pay my employees. These raids can't keep on happening. It's going to ruin everyone."

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said that nearly 95% of the foreign nationals arrested in the past week were criminal aliens, fugitives or illegal re-entrants.

The agency called the raids "routine, daily, targeted operations."

But Sarah Gillman, the supervising attorney with the Legal Aid Society's Immigration Law Unit, said the wave of enforcement had terrorized neighborhoods.

"(The raids) are generally done in early morning hours or late at night and communities are really taken by surprise and thrown into a state of disarray, panic and fear," she said. "It's just really unfortunate."

Immigrants were hesitant to take their kids to school or go to hospitals for care, she said.

ICE planned to release more information about the raids Monday.

"ICE regularly conducts targeted enforcement operations during which additional resources and personnel are dedicated to apprehending deportable foreign nationals. All enforcement activities are conducted with the same level of professionalism and respect that ICE officers exhibit every day," a spokesman said.

But in the meantime, rumors were running wild.

On Saturday a false rumor spread on Facebook and Twitter that 10 ICE officers were at Roosevelt Ave. and Junction Blvd. in Queens, detaining undocumented immigrants.

"Reports of ICE checkpoints and sweeps are false, dangerous and irresponsible. These reports create mass panic and put communities and law enforcement personnel in unnecessary danger. Any groups falsely reporting such activities are doing a disservice to those they claim to support," the ICE spokesman said.

The NYPD had nothing to do with the raids, a spokesman said.

La Catracha, a Mexican restaurant in Staten Island, was nearly empty the day after the raids. (Todd Maisel/New York Daily News)

The agency's efforts were not new. President Barack Obama was referred to derisively by immigration advocates as "the deporter in chief." He deported 2.5 million people as President — more than any other administration in history.

Last month President Trump signed an executive order expanding the definition of criminals who should be targeted for deportation by immigration officials.

"What's different about this time is the enforcement priorities are very different," Gillman said. "We don't know who they're focusing on."

At a deli on Port Richmond Ave a 38-year-old Guatemalan undocumented immigrant worried while drinking a cup of coffee.

"Trump said he was going to deport those who commit crimes. But it looks like he's going after family people like me," he said. "I have kids here. All I can do is pray and place my fate in God. It's all up to him now. We haven't made plans in case I get picked up. I don't want to think about it."

Favio Ramirez-Caminatti, the executive director of the El Centro Del Inmigrante on Staten Island, said there had been a surge in people seeking free legal assistance. Prior to Trump taking office, the center worked with 80 to 85 people a day. Now, as many as 150 people are seeking help at the center.

"They are really afraid about what can happen," Ramirez-Caminatti, 32, said.

With Laura Dimon

Immigration Agents Arrest 600 People Across US In One Week

By Liz Robbins And Caitlin Dickerson

New York Times, February 12, 2017

Federal immigration officials arrested more than 600 people across at least 11 states last week, detaining 40 people in the New York City area, law enforcement officials said on Sunday.

It remained unclear whether the actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents were part of continuing operations to round up illegal immigrants with criminal convictions or a ramping-up of deportations by the Trump administration.

President Trump proclaimed on Twitter early Sunday morning: "The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

But Gillian Christensen, acting press secretary for the Department of Homeland Security, said, "The focus of these targeted enforcement operations is consistent with the routine, targeted arrests carried out by ICE's Fugitive Operations Teams on a daily basis."

The contradiction heightened an already swelling fear among immigrants and their advocates.

The New York operation was planned one week ago and was part of a national action that was planned several weeks ago, Immigration and Customs Enforcement said.

"New York was late to the game," said an agency official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because details about who had been detained were still being learned. The official said the arrests had not been impromptu and had been planned around individuals' routines, adding that a fuller account would be available on Monday.

"All these people are in violation of some sort of immigration law," the official said, adding that some of their convictions included rape and aggravated assault. "We're not going out to Walmart to check papers — we know who we are going out to seek."

At least in the New York area (including Long Island), fewer people were arrested than during an Obama administration enforcement sweep in August, when 58 people were arrested.

The Obama administration was especially active in deporting unauthorized immigrants, most notably in 2012, when 409,849 people were deported. In 2015, Immigration and Customs Enforcement announced the arrests of more than 2,000 people nationwide in one week, targeting criminals. And the Obama administration was still sweeping up low-priority immigrants last summer.

Nevertheless, Steven Choi, the executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, said last week's action was worrisome because it seemed to be only the beginning.

"It really doesn't matter if it's business as usual from ICE's perspective — at some point, we know that they will start to ramp up enforcement activity," Mr. Choi said in an interview. He added that a Jan. 25 executive order from the president about ensuring public safety included the bolstering of the immigration force.

Mr. Trump's executive order also vastly expanded the group of immigrants considered priorities for deportation, including those without criminal records.

When asked if the recent operations had incorporated the new priorities, a Homeland Security official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because operations were continuing, said, "The president has been clear in saying that D.H.S. should be focused on removing individuals who pose a threat to public safety, who have been charged with criminal offenses, who have committed multiple immigration violations or who have been deported and re-entered the country illegally."

About 160 foreign nationals were recently arrested in six counties in the Los Angeles area, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials. An additional 200 were arrested last week in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. And about 200 were arrested across Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri and Wisconsin.

At least some of the rumors circulating on social media over the weekend proved to be false, including reports of raids in Jackson Heights, Queens, and in Huntington Station on Long Island. Similarly, immigration advocates in Kansas

FOIA CBP 000734

City, Mo., were on alert after hearing rumors that Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents planned to arrest people who were on their way to worship on Sunday.

"Absolutely not!" Ms. Christensen, the Homeland Security spokeswoman, said. "That is completely false and an example of the many kinds of irresponsible, baseless fear-mongering we've been seeing."

Through a statement from his spokeswoman Rosemary Boeglin, Mayor Bill de Blasio tried to reassure New York City's immigrants on Sunday. "New Yorkers should rest assured that city officials, including the N.Y.P.D., will never ask about your immigration status, and the N.Y.P.D. will never become immigration enforcement agents," Ms. Boeglin said.

New York is a so-called sanctuary city, which means that it generally does not comply with requests by immigration authorities to hold illegal immigrants who have committed low-level crimes. Mr. Trump has threatened to withhold federal funding for such cities.

On Long Island, activity by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents had not yet reached the level of the large-scale enforcement seen under the George W. Bush administration. In one week in 2007, 170 people were arrested in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, said Pat Young, the program director of the Central American Refugee Center on Long Island.

"At least so far, it's important to know that in the New York area, we haven't had checkpoints; we haven't had sweeps," he said. "They are taking place at homes."

Mr. Young said the "contradictory messages" of the president's Twitter post and the immigration agency's statements had stirred additional anxiety in the immigrant community.

Immigrant Communities Fearful After Hundreds Arrested In What Feds Call Routine 'Surge'

By Doug Stanglin

USA Today, February 11, 2017

Hundreds of undocumented immigrants were rounded up this week in a half-dozen states in what advocacy groups and a U.S. congressman from Texas call targeted raids. Immigration officials, however, cast the arrests as a routine enforcement "surge" while acknowledging the bar for deportation has been lowered.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) confirmed operations in more than a half-dozen cities and states, including Chicago, Georgia, Los Angeles, New York, South Carolina, North Carolina and Texas.

ICE officials reported 161 arrests in Southern California over the past five days and 192 arrests in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina alone. Advocacy groups began receiving calls Thursday from immigrants and their lawyers reporting raids at homes and businesses in the greater Los Angeles area.

In one case, agents showed up at the home of a 50-year-old house painter named Manuel Mosqueda in the Los Angeles suburbs looking to arrest an immigrant who wasn't there. In the process, they spoke with Mosqueda, arrested him and put him on a bus to Mexico — though lawyers were able to halt his deportation and bring him back, the Associated Press reported.

In Austin, the Mexican Consulate told the American-Statesman that 30 Mexican immigrants were detained by ICE on Friday and 14 were detained Thursday. By comparison, the Austin consulate had seen an average of four to five Mexican immigrants detained daily in recent years.

ICE officials insisted the arrests were routine operations carried out severals times each year and targeted individual criminals, not communities. Gillian Christensen, acting press secretary for the department of Homeland Security, said ICE "does not conduct sweeps or raids that target aliens indiscriminately," KTLA reported.

Advocacy groups and some Democratic politicians, however, viewed the arrests as a new move against undocumented immigrants in the wake of a sweeping executive order signed Jan. 25 by President Trump.

That order made clear that just about any immigrant living in the country illegally could be a priority for deportation, particularly those with outstanding deportation orders. It also said enforcement priorities would include convicted criminals, immigrants who had been arrested for any criminal offense, those who committed fraud, and anyone who may have committed a crime.

Under President Obama, more than 2 million people were deported, including a record of more than 409,000 in 2012, but the government focused on immigrants in the country illegally who posed a threat to national security or public safety and those who recently crossed the border.

"These reports show the serious consequences of (Trump's) executive order, which allows all undocumented immigrants to be categorized as criminals and requires increased enforcement in communities, rather than prioritizing dangerous criminals," Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said in a statement.

"This is retaliatory and it is a way to provide political cover — 'Look what we're doing, we're out there being tough on criminals' — when in reality, they're breaking up families," Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva, D-Ariz., told The Huffington Post. "It's callous and it's very, very dangerous."

The arrests are playing out against a backdrop of fear within immigrant communities, underscored by the deportation Thursday of an Arizona woman, and mother of two American-born children, who came to the U.S. 22 years ago as a 14-year-old.

FOIA CBP 000735

The deportation of Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, 36, of Mesa, Ariz., who was taken into custody Wednesday during a routine check-in at the Phoenix offices of ICE, prompted the Mexican government to warn of a "new reality" for its citizens living in the United States and advised them to "take precautions."

Her removal also signaled that federal authorities, who have focused in recent years on the worst criminals for deportation, were lowering the bar. Rayos, who was convicted in 2008 of using a fake Social Security card, had been reporting in regularly to immigration officials but until Wednesday had been allowed to remain in the country.

Fears of a crackdown have been mired in recent days in something of a semantic game over what is — and isn't — "routine" between advocacy groups, immigrants communities and federal authorities.

U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-Texas, said Friday that he was informed by ICE officials in San Antonio of the launch of "a targeted operation in South and Central Texas as part of Operation 'Cross Check.'"

"I am asking ICE to clarify whether these individuals are in fact dangerous, violent threats to our communities, and not people who are here peacefully raising families and contributing to our state. I will continue to monitor this situation," he said.

In Los Angeles, David Marin, field office director for ICE enforcement and removal operations in the Los Angeles area, announced Friday that 161 people were arrested in six Southern California counties over the past five days in what he called an "enforcement surge." He denied reports that the operations amounted to mass arrests.

"The rash of these recent reports about ICE checkpoints and random sweeps and the like — it is all false, and it is definitely dangerous and irresponsible because reports like that create a panic, and they put communities and law enforcement at risk," he told reporters on a conference call. He said the operation was planned prior to President Trump taking office.

He noted that 151 of the arrests involved people with criminal records, with about 75% having been previously convicted of felonies, including child sex crimes, weapons charges and assault. Marin said five people were detained because they had final deportation orders already in place.

The other five people deported had no criminal record. Marin said those five would not have fallen under the enforcement priority list under Obama, but did so now under Trump's executive order, an indication of changes afoot under the new directive.

Another sign of change came from comments before Congress by new Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, who indicated the use of new tactics for enforcing immigration laws. He told lawmakers that immigration agents expressed frustration that they were not fully allowed to enforce immigration laws under the Obama administration. He predicted Trump's directives would end that frustration.

"I think their morale has suffered because of the job they were hired to do, and then in their sense, they're … kind of hobbled or, you know, hands tied behind their back, that kind of thing," Kelly told the House Homeland Security Committee. "And now, they feel more positive about things. I bet if you watch the morale issue, you'll ... be surprised going forward."

A report released Thursday by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center estimates more than 2.5 million immigrants in the country illegally live in the metropolitan areas of New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, which have pledged to fight President Trump's plans to expand deportations.

In addition, 37% of immigrants living in Phoenix, Houston, Dallas and Denver lack legal status, compared to 26% nationwide, the report said.

Immigration Raids In At Least Six States Following Donald Trump's Order To Deport Illegal Immigrants

Undocumented immigrants who gave over their details as part of Obama amnesty said to be in fear of deportation

By Rachel Roberts

Independent (UK), February 11, 2017

"Panic" and "terror" is said to be running through immigrant communities in the US following raids carried out across at least six states as part of Donald Trump's pledge to crack down on illegal immigrants.

Authorities arrested hundreds of undocumented migrants in the first large-scale enforcement of Mr Trump's executive order to take action against the estimated 11 million people living illegally in the US.

Raids took place this week in and around New York, Los Angeles, North Carolina, South Carolina, Atlanta and Chicago, immigration officials confirmed – with more than a third of those detained in the Los Angeles area being deported to Mexico.

Officials said the raids targeted known criminals but reports from immigrant rights groups claim that law-abiding citizens were also targeted in a departure from Obama-era crackdowns which focused solely on law-breaking illegal "aliens".

Mr Trump has pledged to deport as many as three million illegal immigrants, substantially broadening the remit of the Department of Homeland Security to include those with minor convictions as well as those known to have committed serious crimes.

Gillian Christensen, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees

FOIA CBP 000736

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), said the raids were part of "routine" immigration enforcement actions.

Ms Christensen said officers found undocumented migrants from a dozen Latin American countries and some of those detained had convictions for murder and domestic violence.

"We're talking about people who are threats to public safety or a threat to the integrity of the immigration system."

But immigration activists claimed the raids extended to Florida, Kansas, Texas and Virginia and that otherwise law-abiding undocumented immigrants were also targeted.

"This is clearly the first wave of attacks under the Trump administration, and we know this isn't going to be the only one," said Cristina Jimenez, executive director of United We Dream, an immigrant youth organisation.

Spanish language radio stations in Los Angeles have been running public service announcements regarding the "Know Your Rights" seminars the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles have scheduled.

Immigrant rights groups have protests planned in response to the raids in New York and Los Angeles – both cities with large numbers of illegal immigrants.

President Obama offered an amnesty to illegal immigrants who were primary carers of children, regardless of the immigration status of the minors.

Despite his amnesty, the Obama administration deported around 2.4 million illegal immigrants – more than any other Presidency in US history.

Around 1.4 million people signed up for Obama's amnesty – but Mr Trump is determined to overturn this, pledging a "zero tolerance" policy on illegal aliens during his election campaign.

"Anyone who has entered the United States illegally is subject to deportation – that is what it means to have laws and to have a country," Mr Trump said in Phoenix, Arizona, last August.

One million of those who signed up for the temporary amnesty are from Mexico, and over half live in Texas or California.

Having signed up to the Obama amnesty, many illegal immigrants who had been left alone by the authorities for years – perhaps decades – have now effectively handed over their last known address details to the Trump administration, fuelling a climate of anxiety.

"We cannot understate the level of panic and terror that is running through many immigrant communities," said Walter Barrientos of Make the Road New York in New York City.

Susannah Volpe, a lawyer for an immigrant legal services group in Washington DC, told the New York Times there was a definite change in tactics with the latest raids.

"These are agents going into apartment buildings or agents going to work sites," said Ms. Volpe, who had a client arrested, along with five others, at a construction site in Washington last week. "This is new."

New York and Los Angeles have long been regarded as sanctuaries for immigrants where police and other law enforcement agents do not automatically co-operate with immigration officials.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said he called ICE's regional deputy director to demand greater transparency about on-going operations and the status of those arrested.

"Angelenos should not have to fear raids that are disruptive to their peace of mind and bring unnecessary anxiety to our homes, schools, and workplaces," Mr Garcetti said.

"The Administration should take a just, humane, and sensible approach that does not cause pain for people who only want to live their lives and raise their families in the communities they call home."

David Martin, ICE's field director in the Los Angeles area, denied the raids were as a direct result of Mr Trump's instructions.

"These operations take weeks and sometimes months of planning, so this operation was in the planning stages before the current administration came out with the executive orders."

He said 75 per cent of the approximately 160 people detained in the LA operation had serious convictions – meaning the other 25 per cent had minor convictions or were undocumented.

Officials said 37 of those detained in Los Angeles have now been deported to Mexico.

The Latest: Trump Hopes Senate Will Fill More Cabinet Posts

Bristol (VA) Herald Courier, February 12, 2017

President Donald Trump is hoping to have more members of his Cabinet on board this week — if the Republican-controlled Senate acts as expected.

Senators are to vote Monday evening on banker Steven Mnuchin (mih-NOO'-chin), Trump's pick to lead the Treasury Department, and Obama administrator holdover David Shulkin to be promoted to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Shulkin's path has been fairly smooth so far. But that's not been the case for Mnuchin.

Democrats complain that he failed to protect thousands of homeowners from unnecessary foreclosures when he headed OneWest Bank. Republicans on the Senate Finance Committee unanimously voted in favor of Mnuchin after committee Democrats boycotted the vote.

Trump is scheduled to meet with Mnuchin on Sunday afternoon at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

A top White House aide says it's not up to him to say whether President Donald Trump retains confidence in national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Policy director Stephen Miller says the White House didn't give him anything specific to say about Flynn during Miller's appearances on the Sunday news shows. Miller calls it "an important matter" and "a sensitive matter" best answered by Trump, Vice President Mike Pence or chief of staff Reince Priebus.

At issue is whether Flynn discussed U.S. sanctions in calls with Russia's ambassador while President Barack Obama was still in office. The conversations may have broken U.S. law aimed at barring private citizens from conducting diplomacy.

A Washington Post report last week contradicted Flynn's previous denials, as well as those made by Vice President Mike Pence in a televised interview.

President Donald Trump is praising the actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers for the recent "enforcement surge" that officials say is targeting immigrants who are in the country illegally and have criminal records.

Trump tweets that "the crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

Advocacy groups contend the government has rounded large numbers of people as part of stepped-up enforcement. The agency calls the effort no different from enforcement actions carried out in the past.

Trump policy adviser Stephen Miller tells NBC's "Meet the Press" that the emphasis is on deporting those he calls "criminal aliens" and who "pose a threat to public safety."

Miller says "we're going to focus on public safety and saving American lives and we will not apologize."

President Donald Trump's chief policy adviser says the White House is exploring "all of our options" after a federal appeals court handed the administration a legal setback on Trump's executive order on immigration.

Stephen Miller tells NBC's "Meet the Press" that the White House could pursue "additional executive actions" — as Trump suggested on Friday — as well as judicial appeals.

Miller says the goal is to pursue "every single possible action to keep our country safe from terrorism."

He's also criticizing judges for taking "power for themselves that belong squarely in the hands" of the president.

Trump Praises ICE For Immigration Enforcement

Dallas Morning News, February 12, 2017

President Donald Trump is praising the actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers for the recent "enforcement surge" that officials say is targeting immigrants who are in the country illegally and have criminal records.

Trump tweets that "the crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

Trump policy adviser Stephen Miller tells NBC's "Meet the Press" that the emphasis is on deporting those he calls "criminal aliens" and who "pose a threat to public safety."

Miller says "we're going to focus on public safety and saving American lives and we will not apologize."

Advocacy groups say that Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers are rounding up people in large numbers around the country as part of stepped-up enforcement under President Donald Trump.

They say a roundup in Southern California was especially heavy-handed and cite arrests in places such as Atlanta, Chicago, New York, Texas and North Carolina that have rattled immigrants.

The government says it's simply enforcing the laws and conducting routine enforcement targeting immigrants in the country illegally with criminal records. Authorities say it's no different than what happened during the Obama years on a regular basis.

The truth lies somewhere in between. Here are some of the facts surrounding what's happening with immigration enforcement:TRUMP VS. OBAMA

As a candidate, Donald Trump vowed to take a hard line on immigration. Five days after taking office, he signed a sweeping executive order that made clear that just about any immigrant living in the country illegally could be a priority for deportation, particularly those with outstanding deportation orders. The president's order also said enforcement priorities would include convicted criminals, immigrants who had been arrested for any criminal offense, those who committed fraud, and anyone who may have committed a crime.

Under President Barack Obama, the government focused on immigrants in the country illegally who posed a threat to national security or public safety and recent border crossers. But despite the narrower focus, more than 2 million people were deported during Obama's time in office, including a record of more than 409,000 people in 2012. At one point, he was dubbed the "Deporter in Chief" by his critics.

The record was reached with the help of the Secure Communities program that helped the government identify immigrants in the country illegally who had been arrested. In the latter half of Obama's tenure, deportations plummeted to lows matching those of former President George W. Bush's term.ARE THE LATEST RAIDS A DIRECT RESULT OF TRUMP'S ORDER?

Immigration officials say they aren't.

David Marin, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's field office director for enforcement and removal operations in

FOIA CBP 000738

greater Los Angeles, said the agency carries out these operations two or three times a year in his region. He says the California operation was in the planning stages "before the administration came out with their current executive orders."

But immigrant rights groups say the actions are harsher than in the past.

Advocates began fielding calls Thursday from immigrants and their lawyers reporting raids at homes and businesses in the greater Los Angeles area. In one instance, agents showed up at the home of a 50-year-old house painter named Manuel Mosqueda in the Los Angeles suburbs, looking to arrest an immigrant who wasn't there. In the process, they spoke with Mosqueda, arrested him and put him on a bus to Mexico – though lawyers were able to halt his deportation and bring him back.

In all, Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested about 160 people during a five-day sweep in Southern California aimed at immigrants with criminal histories and deportation orders, including a Salvadoran gang member wanted in his country and a Brazilian drug trafficker. Marin acknowledged that five of those arrested would not have met the Obama administration's enforcement priorities.

The agency called it an "enforcement surge" that was no different than enforcement actions carried out in the past and said a "rash of recent reports about purported ICE checkpoints and random sweeps are false, dangerous, and irresponsible." In a statement, the agency said "officers frequently encounter additional suspects who may be in the United States in violation of the federal immigration laws. Those persons will be evaluated on a case by case basis and, when appropriate, arrested by ICE."THE NEW NORMAL?

Despite the claims that this is business as usual, an indication of the changed tactics came earlier in the week when Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly testified before Congress. He told lawmakers immigration agents expressed frustration about that they were not fully allowed to enforce immigration laws under the Obama administration. He predicted Trump's directives would end that frustration.

"I think their morale has suffered because of the job they were hired to do, and then in their sense, they're ... kind of hobbled or, you know, hands tied behind their back, that kind of thing," Kelly told the House Homeland Security Committee. "And now, they feel more positive about things. I bet if you watch the morale issue, you'll ... be surprised going forward."

Acting ICE Director Thomas Homan, who was previously in charge of the agency's enforcement and removal operations, earlier this month made a point of noting that his agents would enforce the law.

In at least one case, it seems clear that Trump's order changed someone's fate. Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, a mother of two in Phoenix, was arrested nearly a decade ago for using a false ID to get a job as a janitor at an amusement park. She pleaded guilty to a felony charge, but the government during the Obama years declined to deport her despite her being in the country illegally. On Wednesday, she showed up at the ICE building in Phoenix for a scheduled check-in with immigration officers and was swiftly deported to Mexico.

Majority Of 161 People Arrested In Recent ICE Raids Have Criminal Histories

Fox News Insider, February 12, 2017

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials arrested 161 people during a five-day raid this past week in Southern California.

Of those, approximately 75 percent have past criminal histories. Others were arrested since they were found to be undocumented as other arrests were taking place, said David Marin, director of Enforcement and Removal Operations for ICE in Los Angeles.

According to ICE, these raids were "routine" and were planned before President Donald Trump took office.

Democratic state lawmakers denounced the arrests and urged immigrants to know their rights and what to do if approached by federal authorities. The arrests sparked a protest in downtown Los Angeles on Thursday evening.

ICE spokeswoman Virginia Kice said it was not immediately clear how many of those arrested had been deported.

ICE Calls 'surge' Of SoCal Immigrant Arrests 'routine' But Some Fear It's The 'new Normal'

Los Angeles Daily News, February 10, 2017

The day after reports of immigration sweeps spread through six Southern California counties, federal authorities acknowledged Friday that there was a "surge" in the number of people detained, but almost all were convicted felons or those with multiple misdemeanors living in the country illegally, they said.

Officials from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement clarified a previous statement that had been sent out Thursday, which called the sweeps ordinary. But they also pushed back on activists' reports of widespread random raids, reports that officials called "dangerous" and "irresponsible."

"While this week's operation was an enforcement surge, the focus was no different than the routine, targeted arrests carried out by ICE's Fugitive Operations Teams on a daily basis," ICE officials said in a statement Friday.

In their statement, ICE officials said 160 foreign nationals were arrested from 55 communities in Southern

FOIA CBP 000739

California, including in Van Nuys, San Bernardino, Downey, Santa Paula and Oxnard.

The five-day targeted enforcement operation began on Monday throughout Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, among others, and was aimed at undocumented criminals, illegal re-entrants and immigration fugitives, ICE officials said. Of those detained, 151 had felony criminal histories ranging from child sex crimes to weapons charges to assaults. Those arrested — 95 percent of whom were men — were from a dozen countries. ICE officials said Friday they did not know how many of those detained had been deported.

Among those they listed was a Salvadoran national who was an MS-13 gang member arrested in Huntington Park and wanted in his native country for aggravated extortion; a Brazilian national wanted for cocaine trafficking; and an Australian in West Hollywood who was previously convicted of lewd and lascivious acts with a child.

It was unclear if the sweep was part of President Donald Trump's hard-line stance on illegal immigration, but similar raids occurred in Atlanta, New York, Chicago and other cities, ICE officials acknowledged.

David Marin, field office director for ICE, said he could not comment on Trump's executive order, but said it takes weeks, even months, to coordinate such enforcement operations. A similar operation took place last summer, Marin said, adding that California's policies make it difficult to deport criminals who are in the country illegally.

"Dangerous criminals who should be swiftly deported are being released in our community," he said. "This operation is on par with similar operations. We do this two or three times a year."

The sweep seemed atypical when compared with those under the Obama administration, officials with the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, or CHIRLA, said during a Friday morning news conference at their office in the Westlake area. Under President Obama, 3 million people were deported, but there was more transparency in the process, CHIRLA officials said.

Angelica Salas, executive director for CHIRLA, disputed ICE's assertion that criminals were the focus on the sweeps, adding that ICE had not been forthright with the community, attorneys and organizations, and she vowed her organization would continue to press them.

"Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. There is a deficit of trust on (Department of Homeland Security) officials who insisted for hours on hours that nothing out of the ordinary had taken place in Southern California during the past few days," Salas said in a statement.

"Make no mistake about it: These sweeps are directly linked to President Trump's 'new normal' where criminalizing and dehumanizing immigrants is convenient to violate their due process and facilitate their deportation," she said.

CHIRLA attorney Karla Navarrete said that when she went Thursday to help a client held at the Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown Los Angeles, she was given no information on how many people had been detained, even when she pressed officials.

"They said, 'things have changed now,' " she said. "This is not the way it goes anymore."

She said the officers told her: "This is the law, and we have our orders from the president."

State Senate Pro Tem Kevin de León said he was pleased ICE released more information, but he said there was a disconnect between information provided by the agency ICE on Thursday and what was disclosed Friday, and he called on the Trump administration to explain it.

"Let me be clear, we want to work together to get violent felons out of our neighborhoods; however, we remain deeply concerned with the new administration's recent decision to prioritize nearly every undocumented resident in California for deportation, and their apparent inability to accurately inform the public of their operations in a timely manner," he said.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said in a statement Friday that he made it clear to ICE officials that he wanted more transparency about ICE operations and the status of all L.A. residents who may have been arrested.

"Angelenos should not have to fear raids that are disruptive to their peace of mind and bring unnecessary anxiety to our homes, schools and workplaces," Garcetti said. "The administration should take a just, humane and sensible approach that does not cause pain for people who only want to live their lives and raise their families in the communities they call home."

In their statement, ICE officials said those "who have outstanding orders of deportation, or who returned to the United States illegally after being deported, are subject to immediate removal from the country."

Others who were not being criminally prosecuted will be "processed administratively for removal from the United States," according to the statement. "The remaining individuals are in ICE custody awaiting a hearing before an immigration judge, or pending travel arrangements for removal in the near future."

That the sweeps were conducted at all were unusual in and of itself, said Ira Mehlman, spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform or FAIR, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that backs immigration reform and laws.

"It's different in that in the last eight years, the law hasn't been enforced," Mehlman said. "There's nothing in the law that says you have to be a felon to be deported. Based on (the ICE statement), they were targeting people with criminal records. The government has a perfect right to enforce the law."

FOIA CBP 000740

He said the Trump administration is prioritizing criminals in the country illegally, but added if immigration reform had been in place, fewer people would be hurt or misled.

"We probably could have discouraged people coming here illegally in the first place," he said.

Still, some families reported confusion during the sweeps, adding that the wrong people had been detained.

At least one Pomona man was arrested and deported to Mexico in Thursday's operations, said Emilio Garcia, executive director of San Bernardino Community Service Center Inc. a nonprofit, organization that provides immigration services in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

While Garcia has already been able to corroborate the information himself, there are two other incidents from Thursday — in San Bernardino and Riverside — that he is still trying to verify.

He still believes Thursday's incident with ICE was part of their normal operations and not a raid. If it were, then ICE would have had to obtained warrants, he said.

That's not what happened in Pomona where a man without legal residence was arrested only after ICE agents weren't able to detain the person they originally sought, Garcia said.

"That was a collateral arrest," he said.

The Pomona man called his family at 9 p.m. to tell them he was in Tijuana, Mexico, Garcia said. Under the Obama administration, he said, the Pomona man would been protected by legal practice of prosecutorial discretion, in which ICE would have declined to pursue arrest.

"The priority for enforcement was placed on those who placed a significant threat to the community, had significant criminal record," Garcia said. "Under the new administration, that's no longer the case, they can arrest anybody."

Marlene Mosqueda wiped away tears during the news conference at CHIRLA's office as she described how her father Manuel Mosqueda was whisked away by ICE officials from their San Fernando Valley home. She said ICE officials took the wrong person away. Navarrete, the CHIRLA attorney, confirmed that Manuel Mosqueda was taken off the bus to Mexico.

"They were looking for someone else, and they got my dad in the process," Marlene Mosqueda said. "My dad got (taken) away from me."

Mosqueda said she has become troubled by recent reports and focus on immigrant communities since Trump's presidency.

"We need to be together. We need to support each other, because in the United States, we're united," she pleaded in front of a throng of media microphones. "We're all breaking it apart one by one with Donald Trump being president."

Week's Immigration Arrests Totaled Under 200 In NC, SC, GA

Washington Times, February 11, 2017

A U.S. immigration official says agents arrested fewer than 200 people last week in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia and targeted people in the country illegally and convicted of crimes.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement regional spokesman Bryan Cox said Saturday that the agency's enforcement activities die down over the weekend, but couldn't say none were being carried out.

Cox says ICE plans to release more details Monday comparing the Monday-through-Friday arrest total in the three states to other periods.

Advocacy groups say an immigration roundup was underway last week in Southern California and arrests in Atlanta, North Carolina and Texas have rattled immigrants. The government says it's simply conducting routine enforcement.

Cox says agents always seek out specific people and don't do traffic checks or other spontaneous enforcement.

40 Foreign Nationals Arrested In NYC Area Operations « CBS New York

WCBS-TV New York, February 12, 2017

Nearly 40 foreign nationals were detained in Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids in New York City, according to a memo released by organization.

"In a memo dated Saturday, February 11th, ICE claimed that these arrests were part of "routine, daily targeted operations" and noted that additional persons encountered during these operations would, "when appropriated [sic], arrested by ICE." ICE has already confirmed operations in five other states last week," the New York Immigration Coalition said in a statement released on Saturday.

While it's unclear how many of those detained have criminal records, immigration advocates say the community is scared, WCBS 880's Myles Miller reported.

"They're terrified, there's complete panic," Camille Mackler, of the New York Immigration Coalition, said.

Mackler said she's spent the past few days calming down those who are worried, and combating misinformation.

According to the ICE memo, the operation "targeted public safety threats, such as convicted criminal aliens and gang members, and individuals who have violated our nation's immigration laws, including those who have re-entered the country after being deported and and immigration fugitives ordered deported by federal immigration judges."

The actions has brought criticism from immigration activists in the area.

"We are horrified and angered by the ICE raids and activity in the greater New York area that has led to the arrest

FOIA CBP 000741

and detainment of 40 people," Steve Choi, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition said in a statement. "Shame on ICE for putting New York's immigrant communities – four million strong – in a state of panic. These arrests do nothing but tear families apart, hobble our economies, and corrode the bonds of trust that tie our communities together – all under the false pretense of "public safety."

Mayor Bill de Blasio joined members of several Jewish groups across New York City in Battery Park Sunday to protest the immigration order.

"Never again means never again for everyone," one woman said.

"When we see hatred and xenophobia spread, it endangers all of us," de Blasio said.

Sen. Chuck Schumer also denounced the raids, calling on ICE to be more transparent about the arrests.

President Donald Trump is praising the actions by ICE officers for the recent "enforcement surge" that officials say is targeting immigrants who are in the country illegally and have criminal records.

Trump tweeted that "the crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

Speaking on CNN's "State Of The Union," Sunday, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie defended ICE's operations.

"What — what people should focus on is what the president is trying to do, which is to keep a campaign promise on making sure that violent criminals who are here illegally are taken out of the country in order to make America's streets safer," Christie said.

"The federal government should be enforcing federal law. And they have to make clear that federal law will be enforced. If that's the president's desire, then he should go ahead and make sure that that's done," Christie added.

Advocacy groups contend the government has rounded large numbers of people as part of stepped-up enforcement. The agency calls the effort no different from enforcement actions carried out in the past.

Trump policy adviser Stephen Miller tells NBC's "Meet the Press" that the emphasis is on deporting those he calls "criminal aliens" and who "pose a threat to public safety."

Miller says "we're going to focus on public safety and saving American lives and we will not apologize."

A spokesperson for Homeland Security said ICE does not conduct raids that target aliens indiscriminately.

Dozens Of Immigrants Arrested In NYC During Raids: Leaked Memo

New York Post, February 12, 2017

At least 40 "foreign nationals" were arrested this week across New York City during a series of ICE raids, according to a newly leaked memo from U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement.

The memo, dated Feb 11, states that the "targeted enforcement operation [was] aimed at immigration fugitives, re-entrants, and at-large criminal aliens."

"The vast majority (nearly 95%) of those arrested had criminal convictions," the document, posted to the New York Immigration Coalition's website adds.

It goes on to say "Final statistics and photos" will be available Monday, though it remains unclear why that information was not released in conjunction with the memo.

Those arrested during the raids will face prosecution, or at the very least processed for deportation.

Any of the 40 facing an outstanding order of deportation or those who re-entered the country will be subject to immediate removal, the memo states.

"All reports of ICE checkpoints and sweeps are false, dangerous, and irresponsible," the leaked document adds. "These reports create mass panic and put communities and law enforcement personnel in unnecessary danger. Any groups falsely reporting such activities are doing a disservice to those they claim to support."

ICE has not yet confirmed or denied the details of the memo, and neither ICE nor The Department of Homeland Security have released a statement.

"We are horrified and angered by the ICE raids and activity in the greater New York area that has led to the arrest and detainment of 40 people," The New York Immigration Coalition seethed in a statement.

"Shame on ICE for putting New York's immigrant communities – four million strong – in a state of panic. These arrests do nothing but tear families apart, hobble our economies, and corrode the bonds of trust that tie our communities together – all under the false pretense of' 'public safety.'"

ICE Detains Dozens In Austin: What We Know

KXTV-TV Sacramento (CA), February 12, 2017

After a day of reports surrounding Immigration and Customs Enforcement actions at various locations throughout Austin, Congressman Joaquin Castro confirmed a targeted operation by ICE in South and Central Texas. The Mexican Consulate of Austin has since confirmed 44 Mexican immigrants were detained in the past 48 hours in Austin.

Here's a look at what KVUE knows about the situation:
Immigration officer incident

Early Friday morning, an incident was reported between an immigration officer and another person. Austin Police said the incident started after a traffic stop was made by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer that then turned physical.

KVUE spoke with the mother-in-law, Teresa Velazquez, of the man who was eventually detained and she said an ICE

officer claimed to have a warrant and tried to detain the man. After running, the man and the immigrations officer ended up in a physical confrontation. Reported raids pour in on social media

As Friday morning continued to roll on, social media began to fill with posts from people reporting ICE raids and arrests throughout the community. KVUE began investigating the reports with law enforcement and Defender Tony Plohetski talked to law enforcement sources at the federal, state, and local levels and none reported any operations outside of their daily action.

"As a federal agency, ICE has jurisdiction and doesn't have to tell us when they are conducting operations in Austin," APD Interim Chief Brian Manley said Friday. "I've not been made aware that anything is different."

ICE released a statement Friday that read:

"ICE conducts operations daily nationwide. ICE does not conduct random sweeps; all ICE operations are based on investigative leads. By removing from the streets criminal aliens and other threats to the public, ICE helps improve public safety." Austin City Councilman weighs in on ICE

Shortly before noon Friday, Austin City Councilman Gregorio Casar said in a statement on social media that his office had confirmed "a large amount of Immigration and Customs Enforcement actions in Austin."

Casar continued in his statement saying, "ICE is out in public arresting people in order to retaliate against our community for standing up for our values against people like Abbott and Trump."

At a press conference later, Casar said he confirmed the raids through the media.

"Multiple members, I think, of the media here reported on an arrest this morning and multiple members of the media here reported on the video that happened right up the street here at Whataburger, so that is another public ICE action," Casar said. "As you heard from multiple speakers with years of experience these sorts of public arrests are clear demonstrations of trying to intimidate the community."

Texas State Senator Dawn Buckingham took to Facebook Friday afternoon called Casar's statements, "outrageous."

"Not only does questioning law enforcement put our communities at risk, it paints a bull's-eye on the backs of the brave men and women sworn to protect us under extremely challenging circumstances," Buckingham said on Facebook. Video emerges of ICE arrest in Austin

As morning turned to afternoon, a video began to make the rounds on social media of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrest that took place Friday morning. The arrest was captured on video by a Central Texas man near the intersection of Lamar Avenue and Rundberg Lane.

The video showed multiple pickup trucks surrounding a black pickup truck with ICE officers working around the truck and at least one person in custody. A minivan and a full-size van both appeared on the scene before the video ended.

The video was viewed more than half a million times by Friday evening and had been shared almost 20,000 times. Congressman Joaquin Castro confirms ICE raids across Texas

Congressman Joaquin Castro (TX-20) released the following statement Friday evening:

"I have been informed by ICE that the agency's San Antonio field office has launched a targeted operation in South and Central Texas as part of Operation Cross Check. I am asking ICE to clarify whether these individuals are in fact dangerous, violent threats to our communities, and not people who are here peacefully raising families and contributing to our state. I will continue to monitor this situation."

An ICE operation in 2015 named "Cross Check" lasted five days and resulted in more than 2,000 convicted criminal aliens being arrested across the nation. ICE also conducted an operation called "Cross Check" in 2012 that resulted in more than 3,000 criminal aliens and others being arrested.

Castro told KVUE Friday night, "I have put in questions to ICE to make sure that the people being targeted are truly dangerous and violent people who are, or could be, a harm in the community and not people who are peaceful folks who have been here a long time, paying their taxes, taking care of their families."

He said that many of the people he spoke to Friday are fearful they'll be targeted by ICE and he stresses that everyone should know their rights.

On Saturday, Castro told KVUE that ICE officials said Operation Cross Check is expected to last between five and eight days and that officials would not provide more information until the operation is complete. Lawyer: Lack of Clarity Causing Confusion

Immigration lawyer Kate Lincoln-Goldfinch indicated one of the biggest problems facing the immigrant community is a lack of clarity over who may be targeted.

"Under the Obama administration, we understood who the priorities for enforcement were for the agency," Lincoln-Goldfinch said. "We had memos that laid it out that said felons, people with significant misdemeanors, recent immigration violations. These are the people that the agency wants to deport."

Lincoln-Goldfinch continued, "Now, under the Trump Administration, under the executive actions, everyone who is in the U.S. who is undocumented is an enforcement priority for the agency. So essentially, no one is safe; even people who have clear criminal histories."

The attorney said that in general, she's received far more concern from clients who are going through the citizenship process rather than those who lack legal status in the country.

FOIA CBP 000743

Friday afternoon, Austin City Council Member Delia Garza was critical of the lack of information surrounding any possible ICE action.

"I think it's irresponsible to not know what's going on, why it's going on. We know it's going on, we've seen video of it going on, we have families telling us it's going on, explain what's going on, that's what this community deserves," Council Member Garza said. "If this is legal, if this is lawful, let us know that." APD Reassures Community They Work for Everyone

In a Friday evening press conference, Austin Police Chief Brian Manley again said that ICE has legal jurisdiction in the area and that means ICE can conduct actions without checking in with police beforehand.

Still, Manley said that APD's purpose is to keep all residents of Austin safe, regardless of their citizenship status.

"I want to reach out to the immigrant community and reaffirm that we are here for you as we are here for anybody else in our community," Manley said.

The chief said that immigrants should not be fearful to reach out to Austin Police and that police officers are not concerned about a person's citizenship status and is instead, "absolutely, 100 percent focused on the safety of citizens." Confirmed ICE detainers

The Mexican Consulate in Austin confirmed to KVUE Friday evening that 30 Mexican immigrants in Austin were detained on Friday, which is six times as many as are detained on an average Friday. 14 were detained Thursday. Consul General Carlos Gonzales Gutierrez said that all of those detained were males. He said that many were picked up in their cars and that while some were taken into custody at schools, the agents were likely in the process of following them. To his knowledge, agents are not sitting outside schools waiting to detain people.

On Sunday, the Consulate confirmed that another nine people were detained on Saturday and Sunday – bringing the total number of people arrested to 53.

The Consul General is now attempting to calm some of the fear created by those detainments.

"I have been very active in Spanish-speaking media trying to spread the message that this is not massive raids, as sometimes one reads in the paper that they are going to schools or going to hospitals or they are going to working sites, that we have not seen," he said.

Gonzales Gutierrez added that many of the 100,000 undocumented Mexican nationals in the Austin area have roots here that go back 10, 15, 20 years and aren't used to this. He said that his job is to tell people the truth and make sure they understand that "the status quo" in the United States has changed.

The resources of the office of the Consul General are available to any Mexican national in need of help. Protests

More than a hundred people gathered Friday night to protest on North Lamar Boulevard and Rundberg Lane. Demonstrators set off fireworks in the streets. APD officers in raid gear eventually pushed the crowd back.

A fire was started near a construction site and caused moderate damage. There were no injuries. Firefighters believe the fire was started by protesters throwing fireworks.

APD said that no arrests were made.

Protests continued Saturday night in the same area. A KVUE photographer witnessed three fight break out at the demonstration.

Organizers said they are planning more protests, including one at the State Capitol next Saturday. Statement from ICE

ICE spokesperson Nina Pruneda released the following statement to ABC affiliate KRGV in the Rio Grande Valley:

"ICE regularly conducts targeted enforcement operations during which additional resources and personnel are dedicated to apprehending deportable foreign nationals. All enforcement activities are conducted with the same level of professionalism and respect that ICE officers exhibit every day. The focus of these operations is no different than the routine, targeted arrests carried out by ICE's Fugitive Operations Team on a daily basis.

ICE will not confirm an operation prior to its completion, nor will ICE speculate on future operational activities. Reports of ICE checkpoints and sweeps are false, dangerous and irresponsible. These reports create mass panic and put communities and law enforcement personnel in unnecessary danger. Any groups falsely reporting such activities are doing a disservice to those they claim to support."

ACLU Promises 'Rapid Response Team' To Combat Deportations Under Trump

ABC News, February 12, 2017

The ACLU, the non-profit rights group whose membership and donations have surged since it launched legal actions against President Trump's executive order limiting immigration, told ABC News today that it plans on creating a "rapid response team" to combat a potential rise in deportations under the current administration.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency operating under the Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for handling deportations, arrested more than 160 foreign nationals this week in Los Angeles, the majority of whom had criminal records.

ICE LA Field Office Director David Marin said in a press call that the raids conducted were not related to Trump's executive order, and described them as being "nothing out of the ordinary."

Between 2009 and 2015 the Obama administration removed more than 2.5 million people through immigration

orders, shattering records, and earning him the nickname "Deporter in Chief" among rights groups and activists.

As recently as 2016, Obama drew sharp criticism from some Democrats over ordering raids that targeted women and children, according to Reuters.

But ACLU senior attorney Lee Gelernt told ABC News that while they were "not pleased" with Obama's handling of deportation raids, his group is concerned that the Trump administration will expand those efforts.

The rapid response team would bring together the ACLU, private law firms and local community groups to ensure that individuals facing deportations have access to counsel right away.

"This administration is just getting started and we're anticipating much worse," Gelernt said in a phone interview, citing the language Trump uses about immigrants as his reasoning for his concern that Trump's approach could be more severe than Obama's. "His rhetoric is already scaring a lot of people in immigrant communities."

In September, the National Immigration and Customs Enforcement Council, the official union representing ICE's 5,000 federal immigration officers and law enforcement support staff, endorsed Trump's campaign for president. It was an endorsement that he highlighted frequently on the campaign trail.

The ACLU have received nearly $80 million in online contributions alone since the election, according to tTe Associated Press, which also reported that the group's membership rates have doubled during the same time.

Know Your Rights: What To Do In Case Immigration Officials Show Up At Your Door

By Elizabeth Elizalde, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, February 12, 2017

Reported waves of Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids have cast fear among undocumented families in sanctuary cities like New York, Los Angeles and other metropolitan areas across the country.

Immigrant advocacy group Make the Road New York confirmed five arrests in Staten Island and one in Queens since Feb. 3. Most of the detainees are Mexican and were taken into custody at their homes.

ICE confirmed there have been 40 arrests in the New York City area this past week.

President Trump signed an executive order last month to crack down on undocumented immigrants with criminal records and who should be targeted by immigration officials.

Yasmine Farhang, an immigration lawyer with Make the Road, said the group has been hosting "know your rights" workshops at several locations to educate immigrant communities if such raids occur.

But how do residents respond if an ICE officer comes knocking on their door? Here are five steps in case this happen to you:

The Department of Homeland Security has been conducting a nationwide roundup of undocumented immigrants convicted of felonies. (LM Otero/AP) Ask to see a warrant

City University Prof. Allan Wernick, who writes weekly immigration columns for the Daily News, said there are two types of warrants.

ICE agents may detain a person in a public setting with an administrative warrant that's issued by the Department of Homeland Security.

But officers can't enter a home without a judicial warrant signed by a judge or without the resident's consent.

"If officers don't have a warrant, don't let them in," Wernick said.

Farhang suggests telling ICE agents to slip the warrant under the door and to request an interpreter if needed.

The family of Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, an Arizona mother who was deported to Mexico, stands behind her attorney, Ray Ybarra Maldonado Thursday. (Astrid Galvan/AP) Request and attorney or contact an agency

Farhang and Wernick stressed having an attorney or an immigration agency on call in case legal action takes place. Gather contact information and have an emergency plan

If residents have an outstanding deportation order and are detained, they have the right to a bond. Wernick suggests having the contact information of a friend or neighbor with access to a fund.

It's also recommended to flag ICE officers if someone has a medical issue, and if children are present during the arrest, have a secondary caretaker on call, Farhang said.

She urged that if anyone has information about a potential raid to contact the Immigration Defense Project's hotline at 212-725-6422. Remain silent

You have the right to remain silent. If you're not the person listed on the warrant, don't answer questions from the arresting officer because anything you say can be used against you, Wernick said. Do not sign documents

Don't sign any documents unless you have a lawyer. Wernick and Farhang reiterated the importance of requesting an immigration attorney and not to show personal documents such as passports from one's home country.

Democrats, Advocates Question ICE Raids After Hundreds Of Arrests

By Tal Kopan

CNN, February 12, 2017

Immigrant rights activists and Democrats are raising concerns this weekend about recent immigration enforcement

FOIA CBP 000745

actions – though immigration officials maintain that only routine actions targeting criminals were underway.

Fear is running high among immigrant communities since President Donald Trump's inauguration – and after the recent publicized deportation of an undocumented Arizona mother of two after a routine visit with immigration officials, reports have been spreading of Immigration and Customs Enforcement stepping up its actions nationwide.

The actions are the first concerted effort by ICE under the Trump administration to arrest targeted undocumented immigrants for deportation proceedings.

It's unclear at this point in the nascent administration whether it was a sign of things to come, or whether the actions were conducted under any different procedures than could have been in place under the Obama administration.

Trump claimed credit for the raids Sunday, tweeting: "The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

It was the uncertainty, the publicity of the raids and the high tensions raised by public comments on immigration by Trump administration officials that had Democrats asking for more information.

California Rep. Lou Correa sent a letter to immigration officials, outlining the unanswered questions related to the latest immigration enforcement actions.

"These activities have caused fear and uncertainty for many of constituents," Correa wrote, and listed 10 questions for ICE, among them "What are the agency's priorities for removal? and "How far in advance were these enforcement activities planned?"

David Marin, Los Angeles field office director for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, said planning for the immigration operation carried out this week began during the Obama administration.

"This operation was in the planning stages before the current administration issued its executive order," Marin told reporters Friday. Trump signed an executive order regarding detention of undocumented immigrants on January 25. Marin said generally it takes weeks of planning before an operation is carried out because the agency needs the time to develop case targets and leads.

Officials are trying to stress that these actions are consistent with regular enforcement.

"We do these operations two to three times a year," Marin said. "This is on par with past operations."

Immigration activists are concerned, however, that these raids may have targeted a wider scope of individuals than had been common in the Obama administration.

Separately, a former Obama administration ICE said that administration "targeted felons," and noted that under the Trump administration, the enforcement priorities laid out in his interior executive order were much broader and could include a wider range of targets than the Obama administration's enforcement priorities.

The official also questioned the Trump administration including in its general targets individuals with previous deportation orders. These are undocumented immigrants who went through court proceedings before and had a final order of removal, but had not been deported by the previous administration. The Los Angeles ICE office confirmed among its arrests five had no criminal histories but prior orders of removal.

"We ultimately decided those people were not a priority as there are literally millions of them and most have never committed any crime," the official said referring to violent crimes or felonies.

The official said that one appeal of targeting individuals with removal orders is that they can be deported "quickly," because no further court action would be necessary.

Operation leads to nationwide arrests

ICE in Los Angeles said it had conducted a five-day operation targeting criminals and fugitives, and said that the vast majority of those arrested had criminal histories.

Seeking to push back on reports of indiscriminate raids, ICE released the results of the operation from its Los Angeles office, saying about 160 foreign nationals were arrested during the week. Of those, 150 had criminal histories, and of the remaining arrests, five had final orders of removal or were previously deported. Ninety-five percent were male, they said.

A Homeland Security official told CNN on Saturday that 37 of those detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in California this week as part of the enforcement crackdown have now been deported to Mexico. The official said they had already been deported and had come back to the country illegally or had deportation orders against them. This group did not have to go through the adjudication process because they had already received deportation orders, the official said.

Mexico warns citizens after mother's deportation

While specific numbers weren't available, ICE said "many" of the arrested individuals had prior felony convictions including violent charges like child sex crimes, weapons or assault charges.

An ICE official confirmed Atlanta had conducted a similar surge this week, and roughly 200 arrests were made in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina in a similar routine enforcement action. Texas Democratic Rep. Joaquin Castro said in a statement that he had confirmed with ICE's San Antonio field office that similar actions were conducted across Texas, calling the action "Operation Cross Check." He said he would be following up to make sure the actions were targeting the worst offenders.

The Chicago ICE office said similar actions in the Midwest netted more than 200 arrests in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Kansas and Missouri. While

FOIA CBP 000746

Chicago said the targets were fugitives and criminals, the only data available about the individuals arrested was that the "majority" had prior criminal convictions.

Some arrested during the Midwest sweep "will face criminal prosecutions by the US attorney's office for illegal entry and illegal re-entry after deportation," the office said.

Trump's orders expand powers of immigration officers

Democrats, immigrant activists react

Still, as Trump continues to talk about cracking down on illegal immigration, advocates remain concerned that the new administration could be stepping up enforcement against otherwise peaceful undocumented immigrants.

On Thursday, protests sprang up at the deportation of Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, a 35-year-old mother of two, who had checked in with ICE at an office in Phoenix the day before, as she had regularly since a 2008 conviction of using a fake Social Security number.

Friday, Democrats decried the actions nationwide as needlessly causing fear for immigrant communities.

"These reports show the serious consequences of the president's executive order, which allows all undocumented immigrants to be categorized as criminals and requires increased enforcement in communities, rather than prioritizing dangerous criminals," California Sen. Dianne Feinstein said in a statement responding to media reports of the stepped up enforcement, including some accounts that the actions were targeting low-priority undocumented immigrants, including family men and women.

"The President wants to show off and it appears he has unleashed the Department of Homeland Security to kick-out large numbers of immigrants and anyone they encounter, without much oversight, review or due process," said Illinois Democratic Rep. Luis Gutierrez. "The goal of such policies is to inject fear into immigrant communities, frighten families and children, and drive immigrants farther underground. It damages public safety and the fabric of American communities while putting a burden on local social services and the foster-care system."

Gutierrez's concerns were echoed by Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, a Democrat from California.

"I am outraged to hear of the recent ICE arrests in southern California. If the Trump administration is genuinely concerned about threats to American security, it should prioritize violent felons and others who pose real danger," Roybal-Allard said in a statement. "My office has been working to get detailed information from ICE."

And a city councilman from Austin, Texas, said he was concerned that ICE was making a public show of force in his city as retribution for being a sanctuary city.

"ICE actions like these are beyond reprehensible," Greg Casar said in a statement. "They instill fear in the community, and they make everyday people fear for their lives."

Trump's campaign promises on immigration

Trump made cracking down on illegal immigration a central focus of his presidential campaign.

While ICE characterized the actions as routine, fear remains that the Trump administration's recent executive order beefing up interior enforcement of immigration laws could mean a vast expansion of deportations of undocumented immigrants.

While the Obama administration had clear guidance prioritizing deportation of high-level criminals, an executive order signed by Trump in his first week set up enforcement priorities that could include virtually any undocumented immigrant living in the US.

On Saturday, the President defend another part of his campaign promise on immigration, vowing to keep costs down on a border wall that would span the US southern border with Mexico.

"I am reading that the great border WALL will cost more than the government originally thought, but I have not gotten involved in the ... design or negotiations yet. When I do, just like with the F-35 FighterJet or the Air Force One Program, price will come WAY DOWN!" Trump wrote in two consecutive tweets.

Here's how much Trump's border wall will cost

A Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman said overall about the agency's actions that everything is "routine," and are not part of casting a widespread net.

"ICE Fugitive Operations teams are out every day as part of routine, targeted enforcement operations," said acting press secretary Gillian Christensen. "These are existing, established fugitive operations teams. ICE does not conduct sweeps or raids that target aliens indiscriminately. ICE only conducts targeted enforcement of criminal aliens and other individuals who are in violation of our nation's immigration laws."

DHS secretary John Kelly told reporters at San Ysidro Port of Entry between San Diego and Tijuana on Friday that his department isn't "rounding anyone up."

"The people that ICE apprehend are people who are illegal and then some," he said. "ICE is executing the law and I would tell you I've been around a lot of pretty darn good men and women in the armed forces and what I saw today, the professionalism that I personally observed in a very potentially dangerous environment gave me great pride."

Immigrant Advocates Decry Spate Of Arrests In LA

By Amy Taxin

Associated Press, February 10, 2017

Immigrant advocates on Friday decried a series of arrests that federal deportation agents said aimed to round up criminals in Southern California but they believe mark a shift in enforcement under the Trump administration.

FOIA CBP 000747

Advocates began fielding calls Thursday from immigrants and their lawyers reporting raids at homes and businesses in the greater Los Angeles area. In one instance, agents knocked on one door looking for a man and ended up arresting another who is in the country illegally but has no criminal record – something Angelica Salas, the executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, said would not likely have happened previously.

"This was not normal," Salas told reporters Friday.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested about 160 people during a five-day sweep in Southern California aimed at immigrants with criminal histories and deportation orders, including a Salvadoran gang member wanted in his country and a Brazilian drug trafficker.

David Marin, ICE field office director for enforcement and removal operations in greater Los Angeles, said the agency carries out these operations two or three times a year in his region.

"These operations take weeks and sometimes months of planning, so this operation was in the planning stages before the administration came out with their current executive orders," he told reporters.

He said similar operations took place this week in Atlanta, New York and Chicago.

Marin said 151 of those arrested in Southern California had criminal records. He said five people would not have met the Obama administration's enforcement priorities but were arrested because they were found to be in the country illegally.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, visiting the California-Mexico border on Friday, was asked if the Trump administration was stepping up enforcement.

"They're not rounding anyone up. The people that ICE apprehends are people who are illegal and then some," he said. "ICE is executing the law."

Kelly said he joined ICE agents in San Diego on two house visits to deport people. He said one was "a particularly bad individual."

The announcement of the arrests comes days after an Arizona woman was arrested and deported to Mexico after what she thought was a routine check in with immigration officials and amid heightened anxiety among immigrant communities since Trump signed an executive order to expand deportations.

A decade ago, immigration officers searching for specific individuals would often arrest others found along the way, a practice that drew criticism from advocates. Under the Obama administration, agents also carried out arrests but focused more narrowly on specific individuals.

In the suburbs of Los Angeles, 50-year-old house painter Manuel Mosqueda was there when his fianc answered the door, thinking it was police, his 21-year-old daughter Marlene said.

"They were looking for someone else and they took my dad in the process," she said.

Karla Navarrete, a lawyer for CHIRLA, said she sought to stop Mosqueda from being placed on a bus to Mexico and was told by ICE that things had changed. She said another lawyer filed federal court papers to halt his removal.

Salas said the agency provided scant details to lawyers who headed to the detention center in response to the phone calls, and in the past was more forthcoming with information.

She also said there is increased anxiety in the community about immigration enforcement since Trump's order.

Democratic state lawmakers denounced the arrests and urged immigrants to know their rights and what to do if approached by federal authorities.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Federal Immigration Agency Says 'Enforcement Surge' Is Routine, Not Trump-related Amid Protests

By Denis Slattery, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, February 10, 2017

A wave of arrests made by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials sparked fear and protests Friday as activists and advocates took to the streets.

Immigration officials said the sweeps in New York, Southern California, Chicago and other cities were routine and not part of a promised crackdown vowed by President Trump.

One man was arrested in Hudson, in upstate Columbia County, according to advocates.

At least three others were picked up in surrounding counties, according to Brian MacCormack, an organizer with the Columbia County Sanctuary Movement.

MacCormack said the group "condemns ICE's activities in the area, and their attempt to separate families."

The man arrested in Hudson was being held at the Albany county jail.

Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, 36, was taken into custody Wednesday after coming to the U.S. at age 14. The government under the Obama administration had not deported her after she pleaded guilty to a felony plea a decade ago. (Puente Human Rights Movement via Facebook)

Hundreds gathered at Foley Square in Lower Manhattan Friday evening to denounce the arrests and deportations.

Similar protests broke out in Los Angeles, Austin and Phoenix.

Most of the United States' 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants live in just 20 major metropolitan areas, with the largest populations in New York, Los Angeles and Houston, according to new Pew Research Center estimates based on government data.

ICE officials said this week they conducted an "enforcement surge" that was no different than enforcement actions carried out in the past.

While Trump has vowed to sharpen the federal focus on immigration, his predecessor quietly increased the number of deportations.

Members of the family of Garcia de Rayos stand with supporters at a news conference in front of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in Phoenix. (Steve Fluty/AP)

Roughly 2 million people were deported under President Obama.

But immigrant rights groups say the actions are harsher than in the past.

A mother of two teens who left Mexico when she was 14 and entered the U.S. illegally was deported earlier this week.

Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, 36, was taken into custody Wednesday in Arizona during one of her regular check-ins with ICE.

Garcia de Rayos was arrested nearly a decade ago for using a false ID to get a job as a janitor at an amusement park.

Police detain a suspect during an operation in Los Angeles this past Tuesday. David Marin, of ICE, said removal operations in greater L.A. occur two to three times a year. (Courtesy Charles Reed/U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement via Reuters)

She pleaded guilty to a felony charge, but the government during the Obama years declined to deport her despite her being in the country illegally.

On Wednesday, she showed up at the ICE building in Phoenix for a scheduled check-in with immigration officers and was swiftly deported to Mexico.

Officials denied that the rash of raids was in any way linked to President Trump's executive order targeting illegal immigration and sanctuary cities.

David Marin, ICE's field office director for enforcement and removal operations in greater Los Angeles, told the Associated Press the agency carries out such operations two or three times a year in his region.

He said the California operation was in the planning stages "before the administration came out with their current executive orders."

Most undocumented immigrants live in Houston, New York and Los Angeles, according to new Pew Research Center estimates based on government data. Roughly 160 people were arrested during a five-day sweep in Southern California aimed at immigrants with criminal histories and deportation orders, officials said.

A Salvadoran gang member wanted in his country and a Brazilian drug trafficker were among those arrested.

The agency said a "rash of recent reports about purported ICE checkpoints and random sweeps are false, dangerous and irresponsible."

In a statement, ICE said "officers frequently encounter additional suspects who may be in the United States in violation of the federal immigration laws. Those persons will be evaluated on a case by case basis and, when appropriate, arrested by ICE."

Hundreds Rally In NYC To Protest Against Immigration Raids

Newsday (NY), February 11, 2017

Hundreds of protesters spilled onto Greenwich Village streets, blocking traffic and sidewalks where pedestrians and drivers waved in support, as demonstrators decried the arrests of hundreds of undocumented immigrants this past week.

Demonstrators Saturday afternoon held signs that read "No Human is Illegal," "No Ban. No registry" and "ICE Free New York City." ICE is Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the federal agency that led the immigration raids across six states, including New York.

More than 500 protesters peacefully rallied inside Washington Square Park, taking special aim at the NYPD's "broken windows" policy that targets low-level crimes such as selling food on street corners without permits.

"People are being deported for jumping turnstiles to women selling churros to men on bikes who are delivering food," said Jasmar Trujillo, 38, of the Coalition to End Broken Windows. "Broken windows puts our most vulnerable at risk," he shouted.

Demonstrators responded with chants of "No Trump. No KKK. No fascist USA" to the beat of drums and cheers.

Jamie Heinz, 72, of Manhattan, who has attended a dozen marches and rallies since the election of President Donald Trump, said she is inspired by the public protests.

"There is major hope with all these people resisting. We cannot give up," said Heinz, who participated in the Woolworth lunch counter sit-ins to protest Jim Crow segregation as part of the civil rights movement.

"People are pressing his [Trump's] thin skin," Heinz said of the daily marches and rallies. "As long as we resist there is hope."

Protesters marched to the NYPD's 6th Precinct, where demonstrators blocked the main entrance and caused more than a dozen officers to file onto the street with plastic

handcuffs. A loud speaker recording warned demonstrators to disperse or face arrest for disorderly conduct. No one was arrested.

Manhattan protester Elliot Crown, 45, a puppeteer and artist who donned a paper mask of Trump with a fake plastic crown, said: "We all have to stand up and restore democracy and strengthen our Constitution. We have never faced these challenges. It is time for all good people to stand up."

Amid the rally, Colin Huggins, 39, of Manhattan played his piano under the Washington Square Park arch with a sign that read "This Machine Kills Fascists."

"I have a rebel streak like Chopin and Beethoven, who fought their political oppressors through their music too," said Huggins, who played an excerpt from a Chopin concerto in support of the French Revolution.

Under Trump Order, Immigration Agents Raid 'Target-rich' Communities In Texas, Elsewhere

Dallas Morning News, February 10, 2017

Some activists in Austin and Los Angeles suggested that the raids might be retaliation for those cities' so-called "sanctuary city" policies. A government aide familiar with the raids said it is possible the predominantly daytime operations — a departure from the Obama administration's night raids — meant to "send a message to the community that the Trump deportation force is in effect."

Frank Sharry, executive director of America's Voice, a pro-immigrant advocacy group, said the wave of detentions harks back to the George W. Bush administration, when workplace raids to sweep up all undocumented workers were common.

The Obama administration conducted a spate of raids, and also pursued a more aggressive deportation policy than any previous president, sending more than 400,000 people back to their birth countries at the height of his deportations in 2012. The public outcry over the lengthy detentions and deportations of women, children and people with minor offenses led Obama in his second term to prioritize convicted criminals for deportation.

A DHS official confirmed that while immigration agents were targeting criminals, given the broader range defined by Trump's executive order they also were sweeping up non-criminals in the vicinity who were found to be lacking documentation. It was unclear how many of the people detained would have been excluded under Obama's policy.

Federal immigration officials, as well as activists, said that the majority of those detained were adult men, and that no children were taken into custody.

"Big cities tend to have a lot of illegal immigrants," said one immigration official who was not authorized to speak publicly because of the sensitive nature of the operation. "They're going to a target-rich environment."

Immigrant rights groups said they were planning protests in response to the raids, including one Friday evening in Federal Plaza in New York City, and a vigil in Los Angeles.

"We cannot understate the level of panic and terror that is running through many immigrant communities," said Walter Barrientos of Make the Road in New York City, who spoke on a conference call with immigration advocates.

"We're trying to make sure that families who have been impacted are getting legal services as quickly as possible. We're trying to do some legal triage," said Bob Libal, the executive director of Grassroots Leadership, which provides assistance and advocacy work to immigrants in Austin. "It's chaotic," he said. The organization's hotline, he said, had been overwhelmed with calls.

Jeanette Vizguerra, 35, a Mexican house cleaner whose permit to stay in the country expired this week, said Friday during the conference call that she was newly apprehensive about her scheduled meeting with ICE next week.

Fearing deportation, Vizguerra, a Denver mother of four including three who are U.S. citizens, said through an interpreter that she had called on activists and supporters to accompany her to the meeting.

"I know I need to mobilize my community, but I know my freedom is at risk here," Vizguerra said through an interpreter.

NYC Immigrant Communities Shaken After Federal Raids Led To Around 40 Arrests

By Edgar Sandoval, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, February 13, 2017

The pews were unusually empty at St. Roch Catholic Church on Staten Island Sunday. Many of the church's immigrant parishioners were afraid to leave the house.

A wave of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids across the metropolitan area last week — resulting in the arrest of about 40 people, according to the agency — has sent shock waves of fear through New York's heavily immigrant communities. People said they worry their families will be torn apart. And business owners said they won't be able to stay afloat as their usual customers stop spending to prepare for the worst.

"Yes, we are afraid. You hear about all of these raids going on. Of course, they are going to stop you if you are Hispanic. You feel like you have a target on your back," said a 62-year-old Peruvian immigrant who attended service at St. Roch in Port Richmond.

"All you can do is pray."

The church is in the area where, a day earlier, ICE pulled four Mexican men from their homes, and arrested

FOIA CBP 000750

another Mexican man outside the courthouse, sources said. Four of the men have children.

The Rev. Edmund Whalen told the Daily News he usually preached to a full house on Sunday, but his church was half-empty. “There is a sense of uncertainty. They don’t know what’s coming next,” he said.

A nearby Honduran and Mexican restaurant, La Catracha, was also quiet. “Usually the place is filled with families. But today is empty. No one is leaving their homes. They are afraid,” said the owner Diana Matute, 40. “If this keeps up, I may have to close.”

Nearly 40% of the city’s population of 8.2 million is foreign-born, according to a 2013 study by the City Planning Commission. In at least nine neighborhoods, more than half the residents are foreign-born.

ICE said nearly 95% of the foreign nationals arrested in the New York area over the past week were criminal aliens, fugitives or illegal reentrants.

They were among more than 600 people arrested across the nation in 11 states, officials said.

The agency called the raids “routine, daily, targeted operations.”

An ICE official noted the agency is obligated to implement orders by federal judges ordering deportations. “The President has been clear in saying that (the Homeland Security Department) should be focused on removing individuals who pose a threat to public safety, who have been charged with criminal offenses, who have committed multiple immigration violations or who have been deported and reentered the country illegally,” the official said.

18 photos view gallery Thousands protest Trump’s travel ban at Brooklyn Borough Hall

Deborah Axt, co-executive director of the immigration advocacy group Make the Road New York, said she’s concerned about the agency’s definition of “public safety threats.”

“Make no mistake: This definition is broad enough to cover nearly anyone who came to this country to survive, to put food in their children’s mouths, or to flee violence and persecution,” she said.

The Legal Aid Society’s immigration law unit established a hotline — (844) 955-3425 — for people seeking answers about the wave of enforcement.

Society supervising attorney Sarah Gilman said “communities are really taken by surprise and thrown into a state of disarray, panic and fear” by the raids.

ICE would not give any details about those detained in the New York area, but said it planned to release more information Monday, including “final statistics and photographs.”

Meanwhile, people all over the city are in panic.

On Saturday an apparently unfounded rumor spread like wildfire across Facebook and Twitter, warning people to avoid Roosevelt Ave. and Junction Blvd. in Queens because 10 ICE officers had set up a checkpoint to detain undocumented immigrants.

The neighborhood, Corona, is home to 66,259 foreign-born New Yorkers, or 64% of the neighborhood’s total population.

Business owners at the intersection said there were notably fewer people going out to eat on Sunday — likely due to the rumor.

“Ever since the ICE rumors started yesterday, I haven’t seen many customers around. Sundays are usually good days,” said Maria Crespo, 70, an immigrant from Ecuador who works at the eatery Chola Cuencana.

ICE called reports of checkpoints and sweeps “false, dangerous and irresponsible.”

The NYPD said it did not participate in the raids.

The agency’s efforts were not entirely new. President Barack Obama was referred to derisively by advocates as “the deporter-in-chief.” He oversaw deportations of 2.5 million people — more than any other administration in history.

In Washington Heights, where 80,174 people — or 49% of the neighborhood population — are foreign-born, families had conversations about what to do should one of them be deported.

“I’m scared. We’ve always been scared because of our situation, but now it feels different. It feels like they are out looking for us, for everyone who is undocumented,” said an undocumented Mexican deliveryman who would only give his name as Cruz. He said he and his wife had talked to their children, who are citizens ages 13 and 18, about the worst-case scenario.

Maria Crespo sells food near the intersection of Roosevelt Ave. and Junction Blvd. in Queens. Crespo said she hasn’t seen many customers since the rumors of an ICE checkpoint started. (Aaron Showalter/New York Daily News)

“I tell my kids don’t do anything wrong ever, not the smallest thing,” he said, adding that he’d told them not even to give someone a free subway swipe.

“If you get a ticket they will look at everyone in our family and that will be it. It’s not safe, you have to act perfect.”

Favio Ramirez-Caminatti, the executive director of El Centro del Inmigrante on Staten Island, said there had been a surge in people seeking free legal assistance. Prior to President Trump taking office, the center worked with 80 to 85 people a day. Now, as many as 150 people are seeking help at the center.

“They are really afraid about what can happen,” Ramirez-Caminatti, 32, said.

The anxiety extended to Long Island, where Aldair Gonzalez, 23, said he has seen ICE patrolling Southern Parkway and in his neighborhood in Syosset. He and his parents are undocumented.

FOIA CBP 000751

"My parents are scared to leave the house, they're telling me to lock the door, don't leave the house unless you need to," said Gonzalez, a premed student at Stony Brook University.

"What can you do? If you're undocumented it's either staying inside or face the fact you might get deported."

Advocates said the confusion over the wave of raids was reminiscent of the chaos at international airports around the country after Trump suddenly implemented his executive order last month temporarily banning refugees, along with citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries, from entering the country.

Hundreds, including Mayor de Blasio, endured freezing rain in Battery Park on Sunday to protest the ban.

"No freezing rain is going to stop us from fighting for justice, right?" de Blasio said in front of Castle Clinton National Monument.

"An attack on refugees is an attack on all of us."

Demonstrators At Baltimore's Patterson Park March In Defense Of Immigrants

Baltimore Sun, February 12, 2017

Crowds that stretched more than a city block marched from the Highlandtown library and wrapped around Patterson Park on Sunday afternoon, shouting "No hate, no fear, immigrants are welcome here!"

Organizers said they called the rally to protest recent arrests by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Baltimore and Baltimore County. They said multiple individuals have been stopped by federal agents without cause and have been detained.

"People are terrified; they're afraid," said Maria Gabriela Aldana Enriquez, the education director for the Creative Alliance in Patterson Park and a rally organizer.

ICE officials said they could not confirm any arrests without more information, and a city police spokesman said he was unaware of any recent ICE arrests in Baltimore.

Nationwide, advocacy groups say federal agents rounded up hundreds of undocumented immigrants last week in New York, California, Illinois, Texas and other states.

Aldana Enriquez said she and others felt compelled to show support for the immigrant community following a series of executive orders by President Donald J. Trump.

In his first weeks in office, Trump has signed orders to build a wall on the Southwest border, to hire more agents who conduct deportations, to take federal funding away from so-called "sanctuary cities," to suspend refugee admissions and to ban visitors from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

He has said the orders, which fulfill campaign promises, will make the country more safe. A federal judge stayed the ban on visitors from the seven Muslim countries, and a federal appeals court upheld the stay last week.

At the rally Sunday, several speakers spoke of the arrest of a man stopped in Highlandtown last week.

Aldana Enriquez did not have details about the arrest and did not give his name to a reporter.

"We are very concerned about ICE officials dressing up as police officers" and detaining people, she said. She also referred to what she said have been more than a dozen recent arrests in Baltimore County and two others in Baltimore, but she did not have specifics.

ICE officials said they could not confirm the arrest of a man in Highlandtown without more information and denied any alleged raid or impersonation tactics.

"ICE regularly conducts targeted enforcement operations during which additional resources and personnel are dedicated to apprehending deportable foreign nationals. All enforcement activities are conducted with the same level of professionalism and respect that ICE officers exhibit every day," spokeswoman Sarah Rodriguez in a statement. "The focus of these targeted enforcement operations is consistent with the routine, targeted arrests carried out by ICE's Fugitive Operations Teams on a daily basis," she said.

Officials said the agency, part of the Department of Homeland Security, is responsible for enforcing national immigration policy, including carrying out deportation orders issued by federal court judges.

Baltimore County police did not immediately respond to a request for comment Sunday night.

Baltimore City Police Commissioner Kevin Davis said this month that city police wouldn't ask residents for proof of citizenship.

"We're your Baltimore Police Department, and we don't care about your immigration status," he said. "We will not check your immigration status and we do not have a database to check your immigration status," Davis said."

Aldana Enriquez said the rally was also intended to express concerns about federal immigration enforcement tactics to local leaders.

City Councilman Zeke Cohen attended the rally. In brief remarks to the crowd, he told ICE officials to "get out of Baltimore," drawing cheers from the crowd.

Some marchers carried signs that read "No Human is Illegal."

Some people who were walking their dogs in the park joined the march. Others stopped and watched from the sidewalk, taking pictures. Some residents heard the chanting and came out of their houses to watch from their stoops. A few drivers, held up by the crowd, honked their horns in support.

One man stopped to shout "We love Trump!" and shook his fist.

FOIA CBP 000752

Trumps Deportation Force Begins Raids On Undocumented Immigrants

Daily Beast, February 11, 2017

President Donald Trump's deportation force promise may be coming true.

Over the last five days, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents conducted what they call an "enforcement surge" in the Los Angeles area, arresting more than 160 undocumented immigrants. Immigrants' rights groups and lawyers told The Daily Beast that ICE also increased its enforcement activities—including, in some cases, in apartment buildings—in a number of cities around the country, including Atlanta, Phoenix, Charlotte, and Austin.

ICE officials and the White House say this is normal. Activists, lawyers, and members of Congress say it's a major change—and likely just the beginning.

"The muscle to do this kind of stuff is here—it's just that the leash has been taken off," said Sarah Owings, an immigration attorney in Atlanta. "They're out and they're hunting."

Owings said upward of 40 undocumented immigrants have been detained in the Savanna, Georgia, area over the last two days, according to the family of an undocumented immigrant currently detained there. And she said she knows of two apartment complexes with high concentrations of Latino residents where ICE officers went door-to-door looking for specific individuals. When people opened their doors, Owings said, the ICE officers would ask everyone present to show proof that they were in the United States legally.

"They're picking up and rounding up anyone they can get," she said.

In a statement, an ICE spokesperson criticized recent media coverage of the Los Angeles apprehensions.

"The rash of recent reports about purported ICE checkpoints and random sweeps are false, dangerous, and irresponsible," the spokesperson said. "These reports create panic and put communities and law enforcement personnel in unnecessary danger. Individuals who falsely report such activities are doing a disservice to those they claim to support."

On Feb. 9, an ICE official told reporters on background that reports the agency arrested 100 people in the Los Angeles area that day were "grossly exaggerated." Virginia Kice, an ICE spokesperson, told The Daily Beast there were 38 arrests in the L.A. area that day.

Kice and Michael Short, a White House senior assistant press secretary, both told The Daily Beast that the enforcement activities were routine.

Many immigration activists and Capitol Hill Democrats say they doubt that. Rep. Raúl Grijalva, a Democrat from Arizona, told The Daily Beast that among his conference, there's "not much" confidence in the agency's statements. And Bob Libal, the executive director of Grassroots Leadership—a group based in Austin that opposes immigrant detention and deportation—said he suspected the agency may have targeted Austin because of frustration over the county sheriff's recently announced refusal to comply with ICE's detainer requests.

Libal said his group estimates that about two dozen undocumented immigrants have been arrested by ICE agents on Feb. 9 and 10.

"We have a deportation defense hotline and it's ringing off the hook," he said.

He added that he wasn't aware of a time in recent memory when that many undocumented immigrants were arrested in Austin in such a short period of time.

"This is a level of intimidation that seems new," he said. "And our community is not going to be intimidated.

"It very much feels retaliatory," he added. "It feels like a vicious attack."

Grijalva said he thought the enforcement surge may be a response to Trump's recent defeat in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, where a three-judge panel moved unanimously to block enforcement of his travel ban.

"Every time he gets hit politically, like in the 9th Circuit, his reaction is to go back to that mantra and use it and use it," Grijalva said, of Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric during the campaign. "Except now it's not campaign rhetoric.

"I'm not a conspiracy-theory person," he added. "But it walks like a duck. It's gotta be a duck."

Short said that's completely wrong.

"They are routine, enforcement operations targeting criminals," Short said. "Rep. Grijalva's comments couldn't be further from the truth."

Kice said ICE's enforcement activities are motivated solely by public safety and law enforcement concerns.

"Our enforcement operations are lead-driven and they are targeted," she said.

And David Marin, who helps head ICE's Los Angeles field office, told reporters on a conference call on Friday evening that the L.A. enforcement activity was "nothing out of the ordinary."

"These are targeted enforcement operations, nothing different than what we've been doing for the past five, six, seven years," he said.

Immigration activists point to one of Trump's first executive orders as the impetus behind the enforcement surge. In a blog post, Azadeh Erfani of the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition wrote that the president's Jan. 25 executive order titled "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States" made upward of 8 million undocumented immigrants top priorities for deportation.

"Our immigrant community likely will experience the paradox of being both at the margins of society and the target of law enforcement," Erfani wrote.

Trump hasn't kept all his immigration-crackdown campaign promises; despite making it a key campaign issue, the president has yet to undo the temporary deportation protections that President Barack Obama made available to undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children.

A staffer for a Democratic congressional office that frequently criticized the Obama administration's immigration enforcement practices said the week's enforcement uptick was uniquely concerning. He said that though the ICE conducted raids that resulted in dozens of arrests during Obama's presidency, this particular surge worries activists because it's happening in so many cities around the country at the same time and in the wake of Trump's executive order. Some Hill Democrats worry this could be the new normal, he added.

Owings said she shares that concern—to a limit.

"It will happen until the beds are full," she said. "They'll have to stop at some point, right?"

Obama's Lethal Deportation Machine: Trump's Anti-immigration Measures Are Intense, But Nothing New

Salon, February 11, 2017

On Jan. 18, Barack Obama used his final press conference as president to pledge to the public that he will speak up if the administration of Donald Trump crosses a line, whether that's imposing "systematic discrimination" or silencing the press. "There's a difference between that normal functioning of politics and certain issues or certain moments where I think our core values may be at stake," Obama told journalists assembled in the White House briefing room. "I would put in that category efforts to round up kids who have grown up here and for all practical purposes are American kids and send them someplace else."

Yet the president's palliative remarks that afternoon concealed a more harrowing truth: Sweeps and forced expulsions of children would not constitute a break with norms of his own administration, which oversaw more deportations than any other in U.S. history. During Obama's tenure, mass incarceration of mothers and their children became a mainstay of the U.S. response to the violent displacement of peoples across Central America. And amid the greatest refugee crisis since World War II, Obama has greatly expanded the deportation machine, overseeing a higher number of border patrols than any previous administration. That deportation machine is now being handed to Trump, whose administration is aggressively delivering on his campaign pledges to slam the door on refugees and migrants.

"We have to remain vigilant of what Obama's actual policies were, and not just pay attention to the rhetoric," Tania Unzueta, an organizer with the Chicago-based Organized Communities Against Deportation (OCAD) and Mijente, told AlterNet. "If you look at the actual policies from the White House and how they impacted our communities, it is obvious that the policies were bad and were harming people."

Forced expulsions

During his tenure, Obama forcibly deported more than 2.5 million people — a figure that does not include those refused entry at the border, self-deported due to the climate of fear or died trying to reach safe haven. This number of expulsions is not only unprecedented, but marked an increase of 23 percent from the George W. Bush administration.

These deportations played out in harrowing scenes across the country, right through the final year of Obama's presidency. In the beginning of 2016, former Department of Homeland Security secretary Jeh Johnson presided over a significant escalation in raids targeting immigrants, migrants and refugees primarily from Central American countries. "Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents barged into homes, even when asked for warrants at the door, removing mothers and children as young as four years old," the advocacy organization Not1More Deportation reported in January 2016.

This targeting accelerated last spring, with ICE boasting in May that it had "arrested 331 individuals during a month-long operation targeting criminal aliens and other immigration violators in six Midwestern states." When Johnson was invited to deliver the commencement address at the Nashville-based Martin Luther King Jr. Magnet High School last May, he was shouted down by community members, including teachers of nine high school students who had been detained since the beginning of the year. "Education, not deportation! Stop the raids!" the protesters chanted.

But these violent sweeps date back further still. In December 2013, the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice released a report detailing an ICE-enforced program of "race-based community raids" known as the Criminal Alien Removal Initiative. According to Saket Soni, the executive director of the workers' center, the program enforced "indiscriminate community raids at apartment complexes, grocery stores, laundromats, Bible study groups and parks based purely on racial profiling. Often working with local law enforcement, New Orleans ICE arrests people who appear Latino and uses high-tech mobile bio-metric devices, first created for U.S. military use in Iraq and Afghanistan, to conduct immediate bio-metric record checks. Most people are handcuffed before the fingerprinting begins, and based on the results, many are immediately separated from their families and transported to ICE detention centers for deportation."

Unzueta said that such raids give a glimpse of what an escalated crackdown could look like under Trump. "We know

FOIA CBP 000754

a little bit about how these raids could look because they were done under Obama," she said.

Increased criminalization

The spike in deportations has been coupled with the continuation of the country's unrivaled prison industrial complex. Shortly after Obama was elected, he expanded the so-called "Secure Communities" program created under George W. Bush. Established as a collaboration between DHS and the Department of Justice, Secure Communities relied on collaboration between local, state and federal law enforcement to target undocumented people ensnared in the criminal justice system and labeled "criminals." The program has worsened racial profiling and escalated the criminalization and deportation of undocumented people across the United States. Advocates have long decried the division of undocumented people into "good" and "bad" immigrants based on their incarceration histories, underscoring that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

Under George W. Bush, the program existed in only 14 counties. In 2009, that number ballooned to 88. By 2012, it was ubiquitous across the country. Thanks to sustained grassroots resistance led by the communities targeted, Obama announced in 2014 that he was ending the program. But its replacement — the Priority Enforcement Program — still relies on the targeting of people caught in the prison industrial complex.

Meanwhile, Obama escalated prosecutions against people seeking to move across the U.S. border. Marisa Franco and Carlos Garcia noted for the Nation in June, "Within two years of coming into office, President Obama doubled the number of people being prosecuted for reentry by expanding Bush's border-court system, Operation Streamline, which tries up to 70 people per day in a cattle line of sentences. The experiment went from three jurisdictions in 2008 to every single border sector except California by 2010. From the time of its invention in 2005 to just four years later in 2009, Streamline sent over 209,000 individuals to serve federal prison sentences for no reason other than crossing the border."

The rise in criminal prosecutions impacted borderlands as well as the internal United States. The advocacy organization Grassroots Leadership reported in 2012 that "From 2008 to 2011, unauthorized reentry convictions (8 U.S.C. § 1326) in court districts not on the Southwest border increased by the greatest margin of any four-year period in history, more than double that of the previous four years."

Meanwhile, Obama expanded the 287(g) program, which was authorized in 1996 by former President Bill Clinton. According to ICE, the program "allows a state or local law enforcement entity to enter into a partnership with ICE, under a joint Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), in order to receive delegated authority for immigration enforcement within their jurisdictions." The program expanded immigration enforcement powers to local police, giving them the authority target undocumented people in the streets and in jails, leading to an escalation in racial profiling. While the Obama administration later partially scaled back 287(g), Trump has referenced this initiative and Secure Communities as models to emulate and "revitalize."

The Obama years have not been without hard-fought gains by the immigrant justice movement. The Dreamer movement of undocumented students successfully pressed Obama to take executive action in 2012 and pass Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). But even this reform, which grants limited deportation reprieve to some undocumented young people who came to the country as children, is being targeted by the Trump administration. Now, those Dreamers who fought for DACA are teaming up with undocumented people across the country to build Movimiento Cosecha, or Harvest Movement. They are preparing to go on the offensive during the Trump years, building towards the ultimate goal of launching "massive civil resistance and non-cooperation" to defend the dignity and safety of the estimated 11 million undocumented people living in the United States.

Family incarceration

In 2014, the mass detention of families fleeing violence and poverty in Central America became the cornerstone of Obama's response to the displacement crisis, which was exacerbated by U.S. policies in the region. As the Detention Watch Network explains, "Family detention is the inhumane and unjust policy of jailing immigrant mothers with their children — including babies. Upon arrival in the United States, families are locked up in remote and punitive detention centers, with little access to legal and social services, often experiencing widespread human and civil rights violations."

The large-scale incarceration of children was condemned by human rights organizations, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and a survivor of a World War II-era Japanese-American internment camp. And it has been loudly protested by detained mothers, who have waged repeated hunger strikes and issued public letters decrying their conditions and indefinite detention.

"We are desperate because this will be the second Christmas that our children have to spend here," seventeen prisoners at the Berks County Family Detention Center wrote to state authorities ahead of the 2016 holiday season. "This is in addition to all the other special dates — such as the birthdays of our children and our own, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc. — that we have had to spend in this jail . . . We ask you, seventeen desperate mothers, to give the biggest gift to our children of being able to spend Christmas among family."

In an Aug. 10 open letter to Jeh Johnson, 22 mothers imprisoned at the Berks Family Residential Center wrote, "Our children, who range in age from 2 to 16, have been

FOIA CBP 000755

deprived of a normal life. We are already traumatized from our countries of origin. We risked our own lives and those of our children so we could arrive on safe ground. While here, our children have considered committing suicide, made desperate from confinement. The teenagers say that being here, life makes no sense. One of our children said he wanted to break the window to jump out and end this nightmare."

Yet, the Obama administration has aggressively fought court efforts to shut down these family prisons, leaving intact an infrastructure that allows U.S. authorities to incarcerate thousands of mothers and their children.

Family internment does not include the tens of thousands of other people who have been detained on immigration charges, a number that ICE put at 42,000 last year. High levels of incarceration have fed the booming private prison industry, even as it supposedly fell out of favor with the Obama administration's justice department. Like family detention centers, private and public immigration prisons have faced rolling hunger strikes. Immigrant detention is consistent with the U.S. track record of remaining, under Obama, the world's largest jailer by far.

Border militarization

Obama's funneling of public resources to ICE and other deportation initiatives has aided and abetted these nationwide sweeps. According to the American Immigration Council, "The number of Border Patrol agents deployed between ports of entry roughly doubled from 10,717 in FY 2003 to 21,394 in FY 2012. At the same time, the number of CBP officers working at ports of entry grew from 17,279 to 21,423. And the number of ICE agents devoted to Enforcement and Removal Operations more than doubled from 2,710 to 6,338."

Immigration authorities are responsible for the systematic disappearing and deadly targeting of migrants, as outlined in a must-read report released in December 2016 by the Arizona-based organizations Derechos Humanos and No More Deaths/No Más Muertes. The Clinton-era "Prevention Through Deterrence" plan imposed in the mid-1990s has "pushed migration into increasingly remote corridors," the report states. "In turn, Border Patrol agents have been tasked with apprehending migrants, refugees and other border crossers in the isolated, vast expanses of wilderness between official ports of entry. With the exception of those border crossers who have already decided to surrender to border agents, the sole method of apprehension available to Border Patrol personnel is chase through deadly terrain."

"Border Patrol agents chase border crossers through the remote terrain and utilize the landscape as a weapon to slow down, injure and apprehend them," the report states, noting that such chases "lead to heat exhaustion and dehydration, blisters and sprains, injuries due to falls and drownings." Meanwhile, border patrol agents "regularly assault border crossers at the culmination of a chase." In remote areas, excessive force often takes the form of "beatings, Tasers, dog attacks and assault with vehicles," the report states.

The result is a crisis of deaths and missing persons in the borderlands. According to the report, which draws on the testimony of border crossers and hundreds of cases from the Missing Migrant Crisis Line, tens of thousands of people have disappeared since the 1990s, with 1,200 going missing last year alone. "We run as if we were blind, as if we had a cloth over our eyes," one unnamed border crosser who suffered wounds after running into a barbed-wire fence, told researchers. "Border Patrol can see everything though, and they know where the fences and the cliffs are. They will chase you towards them."

"The known disappearance of thousands of people in the remote wilderness of the U.S.-Mexico border zone marks one of the great historical crimes of our day," the investigation concludes.

"Remembering lessons"

"It's really important to understand that there is already this massive deportation machine that was constructed by Obama," Bethany Carson, researcher and organizer for Grassroots Leadership, told AlterNet. "The massive nature of our immigration enforcement system already is widely misunderstood and underestimated, as well as the fact that there is a very militarized border that is harder to cross than any time in our history."

Carson warned that this apparatus is now in the hands of an even more dangerous administration. "The kind of prioritization Trump is doing is no prioritization at all," she said. "The way he has expanded who he is prioritizing for deportation means every single immigrant who is now removable is going to be a priority. Now we are seeing that Trump is very willing to sign these authoritarian and outrageous executive orders that constitute an all-out attack on immigrant communities."

Trump's first two weeks in the White House have been met with growing resistance, as millions around the world have taken to the streets, flooded airports and protested American embassies. Communities are staging popular assemblies and holding trainings to prepare for rapid response to defend their neighbors against a potential spike in mass expulsions. Amid this groundswell is a nationwide push, led by undocumented communities and the Movement for Black Lives, demanding an expansion of sanctuary to defend everyone from state-sanctioned violence, including deportations, police violence and mass imprisonment. This movement is not just calling for a return to Obama-era policies, but demanding an improvement on what came before so that real sanctuary is afforded to all: immigrants, refugees, black, poor, Muslim and LGBTQ communities.

"We need to hold people to high standards," said Unzueta. "We have to remember that Democrats have also

FOIA CBP 000756

pushed anti-immigrant policy. We have to remember the lessons we learned under Obama. The conversation about sanctuary cities is a popular response to that. We have seen that we need to deal with criminalization and police if we want true sanctuary in our cities and towns. We need to look beyond rhetoric and statements and look at how actual policies are affecting our communities."

Steller: Tucson Police To Be Tested By Trump Deportation Plans

Arizona Daily Star, February 11, 2017

A new era of deportations began last week, raising pressure not just on those who might be rounded up but also on local police likely to get caught in the middle of new immigration conflicts.

When Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos checked in at the immigration office in Phoenix Wednesday — something that had been a regular routine in the Obama era — she ended up detained, then deported to Nogales, Sonora. On the way to Mexico, the mother of two U.S. citizens passed through Tucson, the hometown of the man whose Social Security number she had, fatefully, used to get a job.

The man, a 32-year-old Tucson native named Alex Andrade, has not had any problems as a result of her crime, he told me Friday. In fact, the courts did not even treat him formally as a crime victim in the case.

The Obama administration's deportation priorities apparently exempted Garcia de Rayos because her crime, though a felony, was "a state or local offense for which an essential element was the alien's immigration status."

But the crime she had committed, using Andrade's SSN and another man's alien ID number, made her highly deportable under a Jan. 25 order by President Trump. It targets anyone in the country who has committed any crime — not just felonies or repeated misdemeanors. It also targets anyone charged with a crime in cases that haven't been resolved. It even targets those in the country illegally who have "committed acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense," a catch-all category for pretty much anybody.

But these federal agents alone can't be expected to find and deport that many targeted people. There simply aren't enough of them. That means, if Trump really wants to achieve this goal, local police will be called on to help.

Trump has said as much in his orders. He wants to revive the Secure Communities programs that reigned from 2008 to 2014 and counted on deputizing local police as immigration officers.

In one Jan. 25 executive order, Trump laid out this plan: "It is the policy of the executive branch to empower state and local law enforcement agencies across the country to perform the functions of an immigration officer in the interior of the United States to the maximum extent permitted by law."

The change was dismaying to Tucson Police Chief Chris Magnus. I interviewed him Monday before he went to Washington, D.C., for a conference of police chiefs where both President Trump and Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly spoke.

"I think everybody understands that there are some dangerous, violent folks out there who need to go back to whatever country they came from," Magnus said. "When we start going beyond that and start talking about stepping away from the Priority Enforcement Program, PEP, that a lot of police chiefs and sheriffs and community leaders from around the country have worked to create — to step away from that is a mistake."

"The old Secure Communities model that says every undocumented person is the same — they're all criminals and they'll have to go — is not only really harmful to the community policing philosophy, but it also makes communities less safe," Magnus said. Secure Communities "was completely unworkable and it created a climate that made it a lot harder to fight crime and get cooperation from people that we need to have relationships with."

Magnus and new Pima County Sheriff Mark Napier agreed, when I interviewed them separately, that resources are too scarce for local police departments to start engaging in immigration enforcement.

"Local law enforcement's first objective is to do traditional law enforcement for the constituents of their jurisdiction," Napier said. "That should always be the priority. My department and TPD are stressed just to be able to do that."

In his first months as sheriff, Napier, a Republican, has retained the same policy that former Sheriff Chris Nanos, a Democrat, had on how to inform immigration officials when an undocumented inmate is to be released. If ICE has told the jail that they want to take custody of an inmate, the jail will inform them when that inmate starts the process of being released.

Usually, that gives immigration officials 1ƒ to two hours of notice, Napier said. If they don't show up, the person goes free under whatever terms their release dictates.

But a relatively hands-off policy by our top local police chiefs doesn't mean officers won't come into conflicts nonetheless. In recent years, protesters repeatedly showed up when TPD officers called Border Patrol agents for help with criminal suspects who officers had concluded were in the country illegally. Protesters blocked streets and climbed under vehicles. It got heated.

Similar scenes occurred in Phoenix on Wednesday night. Protesters blocked all the exits to the ICE facility where Garcia de Rayos was being held, going so far as to climb into the wheel wells of ICE vehicles. Phoenix police showed up and, after warning the protesters, made several arrests.

Don't be surprised to see similar scenarios cropping up in Tucson soon.

"There are a lot of community advocacy groups. Then you have protection networks," Juanita Molina of the Border Action Network told me Friday. "We're going to see a lot of civil disobedience and resistance."

Even more complicated scenarios could present themselves. What if, I asked Magnus, immigration officers show up at a Tucson home to arrest a deportable person and the U.S. citizen family members call 911 asking for help dealing with the federal agents?

"Can we or would we stand in the way of federal agents doing their job? I don't think that's realistic," he said. "I'm afraid the answer to that is no. I hope it doesn't come to that, that's for sure."

Based on last week's events, though, no one should be surprised if it does.

Amid Rumors Of Trump ICE Immigration Raids At Churches, Support Rolls Into KC

Kansas City (MO) Star, February 12, 2017

Fear of an immigration crackdown led by an aggressive "deportation force" under President Donald Trump spilled into Kansas City area churches on Sunday.

Anxiety among immigrants spiked last week after the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency conducted a series of enforcement actions in large metropolitan areas. Rumors were rampant on social media about looming Sunday morning raids at churches.

After hearing churchgoers in the Kansas City area might be targets, the Kansas-Missouri Dream Alliance along with lawyers, faith leaders and other community organizations mobilized their efforts to protect anyone who might have been picked up in a sweep.

About 45 people met early Sunday at the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce offices in downtown Kansas City before heading out at 7 a.m. in teams of three to area churches.

"We wanted to stand up and be out there in case something like the raids started happening within the communities and started targeting undocumented immigrants at churches," said Robert Sagastume, executive director of the Kansas-Missouri Dream Alliance.

The rumors appeared to have been unfounded. As of late afternoon, there had been no immigration enforcement at churches in the historic Northeast area.

Federal officials insist they have not made fundamental changes in enforcement actions, and they deny stopping people randomly at checkpoints or conducting "sweeps" of locations where undocumented immigrants are common.

"ICE regularly conducts targeted enforcement operations," said Shawn Neudauer, ICE spokesman for Kansas and Missouri. "All our enforcement activities are conducted with the same high level of professionalism that ICE officers exhibit every day. The focus of these operations is no different than the routine, targeted arrests carried out by ICE's Fugitive Operations Teams on a daily basis."

ICE does not conduct such enforcement at sensitive locations, such as churches, unless there are exigent circumstances, according to the agency. The agency's formal policy can be found here.

Kansas and Missouri were two of the six states with reports of a crackdown. More than 200 foreign nationals were arrested last week in an operation that ended Friday aiming at immigration fugitives, re-entrants and at-large criminal aliens, according to ICE. Additional details of last week's enforcement operations are expected to be released as early as Monday.

Meanwhile, Trump on Sunday morning said that with the nationwide crackdown, he is keeping his campaign promise.

"The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise," he tweeted. "Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

The fear in the community, however, was real.

Abraham Fierro's mother told him to make sure he had his identification Sunday as he headed to Mass at St. Anthony Catholic Church in Kansas City's Northeast area. Fierro said he circled the block near other churches along the way to see whether he could spot any ICE agents.

Fierro's friend Brenda Rizo said she hadn't heard about the rumors, but the idea of immigration agents at churches would create fear in the Hispanic community.

"You don't want that," she said. "You just want to go to church and that peace that you want to find there with your community."

The thought of immigration agents possibly being there could cause some undocumented families to not want to go, she said.

Also after Mass at St. Anthony on Sunday, Miguel Salazar said it would it would concern him if ICE agents targeted people headed to church. Salazar is the director of Hispanic Ministry for the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, but he couldn't speak on its behalf.

"It's a holy place," Salazar said. "It's a place of sanctuary. It's concerning because people see church as a safe place. If law enforcement or other people are targeting us, it's feels very unsafe."

The Kansas-Missouri Dream Alliance's Sagastume said he was happy that nothing happened Sunday. He said the collaboration, however, will remain vigilant in case such raids are conducted in the future.

"This is just not a one-day thing that we will have and be done," he said."We just have to make sure that we are ready."

FOIA CBP 000758

The main goal is to make sure that ICE agents don't overstep their powers.

"We want to make sure that there is no collateral damage," Sagastume said. "That they are not picking up also the mother, the son or the kids who might not be in deportation proceedings."

Michael Sharma-Crawford, with the Kansas City law firm of Sharma-Crawford Attorneys at Law, was one of the lawyers who was waiting to respond to any enforcement activities at churches Sunday.

He said sweeps typically target people with prior removal orders, which is nothing new.

"But ICE is also using those as an element to question and arrest anyone around them, which is a departure from Immigration and Customs Enforcement," he said. "People with no criminal history, who may or may not be undocumented in the United States are being swept up in this conduct."

The mobilization of immigration and defense attorneys on Sunday was to make sure that resources were in place in case they were needed. The collaboration wanted to make sure ICE agents were following the proper process and had the proper documents.

"It's our job to hold them accountable, and that is what this collaboration has become." Sharma-Crawford said.

Defending Raids, Christie Gives No Assurances To Undocumented Immigrants In N.J.

By Maddie Hanna

Philly (PA), February 12, 2017

Gov. Christie on Sunday offered no assurances to immigrants in New Jersey who are in the United States illegally, as he defended recent immigration raids under President Trump's administration that have netted some people without violent records.

"The laws that are in effect right now have to be enforced," Christie said on CNN's State of the Union, asked what his message was to New Jersey residents who are in the country illegally, but who haven't committed any violent crimes. "And that's what's happening right now."

Federal immigration officials arrested undocumented immigrants in at least six states last week, targeting known criminals. An Immigrations and Customs Enforcement official told reporters Friday that 75 percent of the 160 people detained in the agency's operation had felony convictions, while the rest had misdemeanors or were in the country illegally.

Authorities have said they are simply enforcing the law. But while former President Obama's administration targeted violent offenders and gang members, Trump's immigration order Jan. 25 included among his enforcement priorities immigrants who had been arrested for any criminal offense, those who had committed fraud and those who may have committed a crime.

Christie on Sunday downplayed the recent deportation of a Phoenix mother of two who was convicted years earlier of criminal impersonation after an immigration raid at her worksite, saying that "things don't always go perfectly."

"But that will be the overwhelming minority in all this," Christie said. "What people should focus on is what the president is trying to do, which is to keep a campaign promise on making sure that violent criminals who are here illegally are taken out of the country in order to make America's streets safer."

Earlier Sunday, Trump tweeted: "The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

Asked on CNN about New Jersey cities taking steps to protect undocumented immigrants – host Jake Tapper noted information distributed by Princeton – Christie said "it should be surprising to no one that institutions like Princeton University … are going to take a very progressive, liberal position towards this and will try to grandstand this."

A number of municipalities and counties in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and other states have practices described as "sanctuary" policies. In Camden, a city Christie has worked closely with – and which doesn't describe itself as a sanctuary city – county Police Chief Scott Thomson has said that targeting undocumented immigrants would be "completely counterintuitive to what we're trying to do here."

Christie, who has weighed in on Trump's administration in several television interviews recently, was also asked about allegations that the president's national security adviser, Michael Flynn, had discussed U.S. sanctions against Russia with the Russian ambassador to the United States before Trump took office.

Noting that Flynn had initially denied talking to the ambassador about sanctions, but has since said he doesn't remember, Christie said, "That's a conversation he is going to need to have with the president and the vice president to clear that up."

The governor, who was removed as Trump's transition team chair after the election, wouldn't comment on whether he would accept a job in the administration when his term in New Jersey ends in January 2018.

"As I have told everybody, my intention is to go to the private sector and work to help support my family in a different way than I have been able to over the last 16 years as U.S. attorney and as governor," Christie said. But he said Trump is a friend, and "whenever he calls and – or I call him, and we have conversations, I'm always willing, if he asks, to give my opinion on things."

FOIA CBP 000759

Published: February 12, 2017 — 3:45 PM EST | Updated: February 12, 2017 — 5:44 PM EST

The Philadelphia Inquirer Please enable JavaScript to view the comments powered by Disqus.

California Senate Leader Calls On Immigration Officials To Be 'Transparent And Accountable'

Los Angeles Times, February 10, 2017

California Senate leader Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles) on Friday called on federal immigration officials to release more information about a series of recent raids that authorities called routine, but have left immigrant advocates feeling rattled.

Appearing at a Los Angeles news conference, De León denounced the raids as actions that "tear apart at the fabric of who are are as a nation and as a state."

Federal authorities have said the raids were routine and not reflective of a new, more aggressive enforcement strategy under the new Trump administration.

But De León, who has struck a combative posture against the new president, implied that under Trump, he would not give immigration officials the benefit of the doubt, absent more information. He said the interactions under the administration of former President Obama, whom immigration activists labeled "deporter-in-chief," were more honest.

"As of January 20 with the new president, that dialogue, that sense of trust has been eroded," he said. "It's not good for our communities. … It sets off paranoia, anxiety, angst and high levels of stress."

Advocates have said they have been unable to get more details on the identities of those detained and if the targets had committed crimes that would make them high priorities for deportation.

Law enforcement officials say the extent of the action has been exaggerated.

"We do understand that the federal government's jurisdiction is that of immigration. No one is questioning that. No one is attempting to undermine the current laws of the United States government," De León said. "But they do have a major responsibility to make sure they are transparent and accountable to their actions."

We Need To Reality-check Ourselves On Immigration Raids

By Joey Jackson

CNN, February 12, 2017

There's a new sheriff in town: President Donald J. Trump has made clear that in matters of immigration, particularly from Mexico, a seismic shift is underway. Only five days after being sworn in, Trump signed a sweeping executive order seeking to both prevent illegal immigration and remove undocumented immigrants.

Among other things, the order seeks the construction of a wall, terminates the "catch and release" procedure whereby undocumented immigrants are detained and released, adds 5,000 border patrol agents, calls for a report quantifying all foreign aid provided by the United States to Mexico annually during the past five years, and makes provisions for greater coordination between federal, state and local governments in implementing immigration policy.

Then came the immigration raids. Last week, Immigration and Customs Enforcement sent enforcement squads into cities across the country, from the East Coast of New York to the West Coast of Los Angeles. They did so in an effort to expel from the country those who the President has called "bad dudes." Officials noted that this effort was in the planning stages for weeks, and had little to do with Trump's executive order. It was also pointed out that the Obama administration used these squads and that Obama was referred to by immigrant rights activists as the "Deporter in Chief" for his record of deportations.

But while these raids are not new in and of themselves, advocates and others watching these raids unfold are right to worry whether this President is casting a wider net and expanding the objective in ICE enforcement beyond national security. Of the 160 illegal immigrants arrested during the Trump raids, the vast majority had felony convictions and merited deportation. To be sure, the federal government has a solemn obligation to secure the borders and to protect the public. But there are questions as to the other arrests. The concern from a justice perspective, then, is not the enforcement effort itself. The executive branch enforces the law, and any President is entitled to do so in the manner he deems most effective in keeping with his philosophy. Instead, the concern lies in whether enforcement will be over broad and unduly aggressive.

There's reason to be concerned. Homeland Security Director John Kelly testified before Congress last week for the first time. In doing so, he noted that morale among ICE officers was down under the Obama administration, because they felt like their hands were tied. He further suggested that morale would be boosted under the new President. The implication then, is that the Trump administration will enforce immigration laws more aggressively than previous administrations have.

Where the raids lead to arrests of those with existing deportation orders, or who are violent criminals, or are deemed detrimental to the security of US interests, the President will be on firm legal footing. But simply kicking "them" out because "they" don't belong here in the first place raises other issues. Fortunately, there are immigration courts that will serve as a check on executive authority.

A common misconception is that immigrants don't have constitutional rights. This is a myth. The Constitution affords protection to everyone and anyone on US soil. Accordingly,

any undocumented immigrant who was picked up in the recent raids, or other raids to come, is afforded due process under the laws of our land. That essentially means they must be given notice and an opportunity to be heard in immigration court before being deported. Those courts assess deportations on a case-by-case basis and can override the government's efforts to deport where they deem it appropriate.

One case in particular has emerged as a head scratcher and a tearjerker. Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos is a 35-year-old woman who came to this country when she was 14 years old and lived here for over 20 years. In 2008, she was convicted of a felony for using a fake Social Security number. After her case was adjudicated in immigration court, ICE placed her under supervision, with the proviso that she report to immigration authorities annually. Each time she did so in the past seven years, she simply checked in with them and was released. Upon checking in with ICE last week, however, she was detained, and deported to Mexico.

Why? Yes, Garcia had a felony conviction. Yes, she violated the law. Yes, there was a valid underlying deportation order that justified her removal. But was it really necessary to take her away from her husband and children in the interest of national security? And so the question remains, how many cases like Garcia's are out there, and how will they be handled under what looks like a new era of aggressive enforcement? And are people like Garcia the type of people whom the President seeks to deport under his tough new immigration policies? What public safety and border security interest does that serve?

It's one thing to be tough on immigration. It's yet another to be fair. Those watching closely are right to be worried about current trends, but should take comfort in knowing that immigration courts will serve as a check upon any overreach by ICE in conducting these raids and carrying out the President's enforcement initiatives. But we should really reality-check ourselves, too, and ask whether a country like the United States, which sets the standard for the world in human rights, can't provide a better example to the world.

ICE Arrests Alleged 'Criminal Aliens' In Northern Virginia

WUSA-TV Washington, February 10, 2017

Agents from the US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement Agency arrested an unknown number of people at a large apartment complex in Annandale, and at at least one other location in Alexandria this week, immigration activists say, as part of what appears to be stepped up enforcement actions around the country.

At the predominantly Spanish-speaking Fairmont Gardens apartment complex in Annandale, several people said they saw a large law enforcement presence earlier in the week. None wanted to be quoted or have their names used. One man turned and walked quickly away at a reporter's mention of the very word "immigration."

Immigration activists said ICE agents targeted people at the complex who already had orders of deportation, but also made so-called "collateral" arrests of other people who merely lacked proper documentation, but had committed no other crime.

The arrests in Virginia appear to be part of a broad effort to step up enforcement across the country, first reported Friday by the Washington Post.

A spokesperson for ICE responded to questions about the raids in Virginia with the a statement. The agency did not address the specific questions asked about the number or types of arrests made.

"Every day, as part of routine targeted enforcement operations, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrest criminal aliens and other individuals who are in violation of our nation's immigration laws," the statement read. "ICE conducts targeted immigration enforcement in compliance with federal law and agency policy. ICE does not conduct sweeps or raids that target aliens indiscriminately."

An official at the Department of Homeland Security told WUSA9 the enforcement actions this week, which have drawn large protests in Los Angeles, and significant attention elsewhere, are not out of the ordinary, but may be getting increased attention because of the Trump administration's immigration policy.

On Friday night, The Mexican Consulate of Austin confirmed 44 Mexican immigrants were detained in the past 48 hours, according to KVUE.

Spokespeople for the Fairfax County Police Department and Alexandria City Police Department each said their departments had no knowledge of the ICE actions beforehand.

Similarly, staffers for Democratic congressmen Don Beyer and Gerry Connolly, who represent the areas where the arrests were said to take place, had no knowledge of ICE's action on Friday night.

A spokesperson for Governor Terry McAuliffe did not respond to questions about the arrests on Friday.

5 Immigrants From Mexico In Staten Island Arrested In ICE Raids: Source

WPIX-TV New York, February 11, 2017

Five Staten Island residents from Mexico were arrested in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids that were conducted in New York City this past week.

The immigrants were arrested in ICE raids that began on Feb. 3 and ended this Wednesday, a source told PIX11 news.

Four of the residents were arrested at their homes while another was arrested outside a courthouse in Staten Island, according to the source.

Four of the people arrested have children who are U.S. citizens, the source said.

It's unclear if any of the individuals who were taken into custody had criminal records.

Deborah Axt, co-executive director of Make the Road New York, confirmed five people were arrested in the raids. The organization released a statement on the arrests, denouncing the ICE raids that have taken place in at least six other states.

"The Trump Administration has now doubled down on its war on our communities. We have confirmed ICE raids that have swept up five immigrant Staten Island residents over the past several days. These raids have the explicit purpose of tearing families apart. Our communities are understandably extremely concerned, but also resilient. We are here to stay, and we will fight back."

New York City is a sanctuary city, a term that generally refers to communities that do not cooperate with federal immigration officials. There are at least 39 cities in the U.S. that are sanctuary cities.

President Donald Trump had promised throughout his campaign to deport the 11 million undocumented people living in the U.S.

Earlier this week an undocumented Mexican immigrant Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos was deported from Arizona to Mexico. This heightened fears that more deportations will be happening.

ICE agency said majority of the arrests, that have amounted to hundreds, were mostly criminals and fugitives.

A Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman said overall about the agency's actions that everything is "routine," and are not part of casting a widespread net.

"ICE Fugitive Operations teams are out every day as part of routine, targeted enforcement operations," said acting press secretary Gillian Christensen. "These are existing, established fugitive operations teams. ICE does not conduct sweeps or raids that target aliens indiscriminately. ICE only conducts targeted enforcement of criminal aliens and other individuals who are in violation of our nation's immigration laws."

While ICE characterized the actions as routine, fear remains that the Trump administration's recent executive order beefing up interior enforcement of immigration laws could mean a vast expansion of deportations of undocumented immigrants.

Kansas Included In National Immigration Crackdown, ICE Says

Wichita (KS) Eagle, February 11, 2017

More than 200 foreign nationals were arrested in five states across the Midwest this past week, including in Kansas, according to an official with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

On Friday, the Washington Post reported that Kansas was one of six states with reports of a crackdown on immigrants without permission to be in the country. The other five states included major urban centers such as Los Angeles and Atlanta, as well as Texas, Florida and Virginia.

This latest report from immigration officials includes several additional states in the Midwest, including Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Kentucky and Missouri.

In Wichita, there were reports of at least three arrests on suspected immigration violations two weeks ago, but it wasn't immediately clear whether those arrests were included in the 200 arrested in this crackdown.

According to the release from immigration enforcement, more than half of those arrested had criminal convictions. In one of the Wichita arrests two weeks ago, the arrest was for driving without insurance.

In other parts of the country, there have been reports of mothers who have been in the U.S. for two decades being detained, as well as people who had showed up voluntarily for yearly check-ins.

So far, the representative for immigration enforcement attributed this latest crackdown to "routine, daily, targeted operations." It wasn't immediately clear whether any of those arrested were picked up because of an executive order signed by President Trump that is intended to make it easier to enforce immigration laws.

According to ICE, the latest arrests were targeted and were not made by stopping individuals indiscriminately, by stopping people at checkpoints nor by going door-to-door.

But the report also said that if agents encounter additional immigrants who don't have permission to be in the country while searching for someone else, those immigrants can be detained as well.

Members of the Congressional Hispanic Congress on Saturday demanded an immediate meeting with Thomas Homan, the acting head of ICE.

"These raids have struck fear in the hearts of the immigrant community as many fear that President Trump's promised 'deportation force' is now in full-swing," the lawmakers wrote in a letter to Homan.

5 Men On Staten Island Detained By ICE Agents This Week, Says Immigrant Advocacy Group

NY1-TV New York, February 11, 2017

The immigrant advocacy group Make the Road New York said Saturday night that five men on Staten Island were

detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents this week.

It is unclear what led to them being detained.

Mayor Bill de Blasio's office released a statement, saying it has "received credible reports of immigration enforcement activity in several New York City neighborhoods in the last few days. The Mayor is closely monitoring the situation and the Administration is working with NYPD and community organizations to verify the activity as we receive reports."

Immigration officials put out their own statement that says "ICE regularly conducts targeted enforcement operations during which additional resources and personnel are dedicated to apprehending deportable foreign nationals. The focus of these operations is no different than the routine, targeted arrests carried out by ICE's Fugitive Operations Teams on a daily basis."

City Hall officials are reminding New Yorkers that city officials and members of the NYPD will never ask about their immigration status.

The New York Immigration Coalition estimates there are 500,000 people living in New York City illegally — and many more with green cards that, they say, fear deportation.

"There is a factor of fear in the communities, but we're trying to make sure that we provide the right information, that we provide a space for them to come forward if they hear [of] or are victims of it, and make sure that people are prepared," said Gonzalo Mercado. Mercado heads heads La Colmena, which works with the immigrant community on Staten Island.

The news of the five men being detained came hours after hundreds of people rallied at Washington Square Park, calling on police to stop arresting undocumented immigrants for low-level crimes that may get them deported.

About 200 Arrested In ICE Raids In NC, SC, Georgia

WGHP-TV Greensboro (NC), February 11, 2017

Democrats raised concerns Friday and Saturday about recent immigration enforcement actions — though immigration officials say that only routine actions targeting criminals were underway.

Fear is running high among immigrant communities since President Donald Trump's inauguration — and after the recent publicized deportation of an undocumented Arizona mother of two after a routine visit with immigration officials, reports have been spreading of Immigration and Customs Enforcement stepping up its actions in the southwestern US.

The actions are the first concerted effort by ICE under the Trump administration to arrest targeted undocumented immigrants for deportation proceedings.

It's unclear at this point in the nascent administration whether it was a sign of things to come, or whether the actions were conducted under any different procedures than could have been in place under the Obama administration. It was the uncertainty, the publicity of the raids and the high tensions raised by public comments on immigration by Trump administration officials that had Democrats asking for more information.

"These reports show the serious consequences of the president's executive order, which allows all undocumented immigrants to be categorized as criminals and requires increased enforcement in communities, rather than prioritizing dangerous criminals," California Sen. Dianne Feinstein said in a statement responding to media reports of the stepped up enforcement, including some accounts that the actions were targeting low-priority undocumented immigrants, including family men and women.

ICE in Los Angeles said Friday it had conducted a five-day operation targeting criminals and fugitives, and said that the vast majority of those arrested had criminal histories.

Seeking to push back on reports of indiscriminate raids, ICE released the results of the operation from its Los Angeles office, saying about 160 foreign nationals were arrested during the week. Of those, 150 had criminal histories, and of the remaining arrests, five had final orders of removal or were previously deported. Ninety-five percent were male, they said.

While specific numbers weren't available, ICE said "many" of the arrested individuals had prior felony convictions including violent charges like child sex crimes, weapons or assault charges.

An ICE official confirmed Atlanta had conducted a similar surge this week, and roughly 200 arrests were made in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina in a similar routine enforcement action. Texas Democratic Rep. Joaquin Castro said in a statement that he had confirmed with ICE's San Antonio field office that similar actions were conducted across Texas, calling the action "Operation Cross Check." He said he would be following up to make sure the actions were targeting the worst offenders.

Full numbers for the actions across the country will be made available Monday, the agency said.

A Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman said overall about the agency's actions that everything is "routine," and are not part of casting a widespread net.

"ICE Fugitive Operations teams are out every day as part of routine, targeted enforcement operations," said acting press secretary Gillian Christensen. "These are existing, established fugitive operations teams. ICE does not conduct sweeps or raids that target aliens indiscriminately. ICE only conducts targeted enforcement of criminal aliens and other individuals who are in violation of our nation's immigration laws."

Still, as Trump continues to talk about cracking down on illegal immigration, advocates remain concerned that the new

administration could be stepping up enforcement against otherwise peaceful undocumented immigrants.

On Thursday, protests sprang up at the deportation of Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, a 35-year-old mother of two, who had checked in with ICE at an office in Phoenix the day before, as she had regularly since a 2008 conviction of using a fake Social Security number.

Friday, Democrats decried the actions nationwide as needlessly causing fear for immigrant communities.

"The President wants to show off and it appears he has unleashed the Department of Homeland Security to kick-out large numbers of immigrants and anyone they encounter, without much oversight, review or due process," said Illinois Democratic Rep. Luis Gutierrez. "The goal of such policies is to inject fear into immigrant communities, frighten families and children, and drive immigrants farther underground. It damages public safety and the fabric of American communities while putting a burden on local social services and the foster-care system."

Gutierrez's concerns were echoed by Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, a Democrat from California.

"I am outraged to hear of the recent ICE arrests in southern California. If the Trump administration is genuinely concerned about threats to American security, it should prioritize violent felons and others who pose real danger," Roybal-Allard said in a statement. "My office has been working to get detailed information from ICE."

Fellow California Rep. Lou Correa tweeted he was "deeply concerned" about the actions as well, and after ICE announced the arrests, he sent a letter demanding more answers.

"These activities have caused fear and uncertainty for many of constituents," Correa wrote, and listed 10 questions he wanted answers for from ICE, among "How far in advance were these enforcement activities planned?"

And a city councilman from Austin, Texas, said he was concerned that ICE was making a public show of force in his city as retribution for being a sanctuary city.

"ICE actions like these are beyond reprehensible," Greg Casar said in a statement. "They instill fear in the community, and they make everyday people fear for their lives."

While ICE characterized the actions as routine, fear remains that the Trump administration's recent executive order beefing up interior enforcement of immigration laws could mean a vast expansion of deportations of undocumented immigrants.

While the Obama administration had clear guidance prioritizing deportation of high-level criminals, an executive order signed by Trump in his first week set up enforcement priorities that could include virtually any undocumented immigrant living in the US.

Trump made cracking down on illegal immigration a central focus of his presidential campaign. On Saturday, the President defend another part of his campaign promise on immigration, vowing to keep costs down on a border wall that would span the US southern border with Mexico.

"I am reading that the great border WALL will cost more than the government originally thought, but I have not gotten involved in the … design or negotiations yet. When I do, just like with the F-35 FighterJet or the Air Force One Program, price will come WAY DOWN!" Trump wrote in two consecutive tweets.

160 Arrested In Immigration Raids That Are Stoking Fear

Los Angeles Weekly, February 10, 2017

About 160 immigrants here illegally were taken into custody as part of a five-day "targeted enforcement operation" in Southern California by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, authorities said. Immigrants rights advocates caught wind of the raids yesterday, immediately tying them to President Trump's vow to deport millions of undocumented newcomers.

Maria Teresa Borden, a spokeswoman for the group Red Mexicana de Líderes y Organizaciones Migrantes (RedMex), said that while ICE in the past has been more transparent about such operations, it has so far refused to give immigration attorneys a list of those arrested. "We want more information on who they're detaining and why," she says. "They haven't let us know.

"ICE claims that these things it's doing are routine, and they are part of their regular work, but our community is telling us otherwise," she says. "We tend to believe what our community tells us."

ICE's slow release of information about the sweeps is increasing insecurity among immigrants. In L.A. County, an estimated one in 10 people is undocumented.

The federal agency did release some information today. ICE officials appeared to reject the claim that the six-county sweep was part of a new push by the Trump administration to eject the undocumented. In an email, ICE spokeswoman Virginia Kice said there were "many ... inaccurate claims surrounding this operation." An ICE statement described reports of immigration checkpoints and "random sweeps" as "false" and "irresponsible."

"While this week's operation was an enforcement surge, the focus was no different than the routine, targeted arrests carried out by ICE's Fugitive Operations Teams on a daily basis," according to ICE's statement today.

The agency says the Monday-through-Friday operation swept up 150 people with criminal histories and at least five others who were under removal orders or who had been deported before. Another five or so were collared, though it's not clear why. "Many of the arrestees had prior felony

FOIA CBP 000764

convictions for serious or violent offenses, such as child sex crimes, weapons charges and assault," according to ICE.

Those caught up in the 95 percent male sweep included a Mara Salvatrucha gang member in Huntington Park wanted for alleged extortion in El Salvador, a Brazilian in L.A. suspected of cocaine trafficking in his homeland and an Australian in West Hollywood convicted of lewd acts with a child, ICE officials said.

The raids came to the attention of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) yesterday because immigrants were phoning in reports of federal arrests in Santa Paula, Oxnard, Van Nuys, San Bernardino and Downey, according to the nonprofit. Attorneys rushed to a federal detention center and advocates staged impromptu protests outside the downtown federal building last night.

The Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) issued a statement today advising that immigrants have the right to remain silent if confronted by agents and that they should seek an attorney's help if they're questioned. The statement even suggests people walk away from agents, calmly, if they're not being detained or arrested.

A Los Angeles woman named Marlene Mosqueda told reporters today that her noncriminal father was arrested in the sweeps, ostensibly because he has a years-old deportation order. "They took my parents away,'" she said. "They took my family away."

ICE states those suspects not recommended for criminal prosecution will likely face "removal in the near future."

Arrests In Metro-Savannah Part Of Region-wide ICE Operation

WTOC-TV Savannah (GA), February 10, 2017

More than two-dozen people living in the metro-Savannah area without legal permission were rounded up by the Department of Homeland Security this week.

The two-day operation was part of a week-long, region-wide effort where agents arrested approximately 200 unlawfully present foreign nationals all in Georgia, North and South Carolina.

A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesman says the raids did not target those living here without legal permission indiscriminately.

In part of the statement released Friday, the spokesman says:

Every day, as part of routine targeted enforcement operations, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Fugitive Operations teams arrest criminal aliens and other individuals who are in violation of our nation's immigration laws…

ICE conducts targeted immigration enforcement in compliance with federal law and agency policy. ICE does not conduct sweeps or raids that target aliens indiscriminately.

Most of those who were arrested in the Savannah area are convicted criminals, according to officials.

The fact that all aren't is cause for concern for some I've talked to Friday, including a local immigration lawyer and several non-profit groups.

ICE says they will be able to tell us the background of the non-convict arrests, as well as the spectrum of crimes committed by those arrested, by Monday. An ICE representative adds the charges include murder, battery and DUI.

In the meantime, local groups like the Metropolitan Savannah Hispanic Chamber of Commerce are trying to find ways to help those either left behind following raids, like children, or those approached by immigration agents.

"We just want to make sure that immigrants know what their rights are, and that as best we can, make their lives as good. You're talking about children, you're talking about parents, you're talking about family members that in some cases have been here pretty much their whole lives," said La Voz Latina Editor, John Newton.

The director of Catholic Charities of South Georgia is well aware of the recent raids, and in light of changing national policy regarding immigration, says the Catholic Church is making more resources available for immigrant families in our community.

"We're very, very concerned about people who have invested in our community, and the parishes are now providing workshops. We have attorneys who are going to help with workshops. We have given them information about GLAHR, which is the Georgia Legal Assistance for Human Rights program, and the Latin American Association, and local attorneys who are willing to listen to their cases and see what can be done," said Catholic Charities of South Georgia Director Sister Pat Brown.

A sanctuary city or state is a place that has policies designed to not prosecute those living in the in the United States without legal permission.

There are four states that are considered sanctuaries: California, Colorado, Connecticut, and New Mexico. In Georgia, only Clayton County follows these policies and South Carolina does not have any.

WTOC has learned an immigration lawyer retained by several families of those arrested in the round-up locally is headed to the Irwin County Detention Center this weekend, where those arrested locally are being held.

Consulate: 44 Mexican Nationals Detained In Targeted Arrests

KEYE-TV Austin (TX), February 10, 2017

UPDATE: The Mexican Consulate in Austin confirms 30 Mexican nationals were detained in Central Texas on Friday – 14 were detained yesterday.

Consulate officials say theses are only partial numbers for targeted arrests – and the numbers could go up as they get more information.

EARLIER:

Congressman Joaquin Castro confirmed in a statement Friday that Immigration and Customs Enforcement is conducting targeted raids in Central and South Texas.

Castro was informed by the San Antonio ICE field office that the raids are part of Operation Cross Check.

"I am asking ICE to clarify whether these individuals are in fact dangerous, violent threats to our communities, and not people who are here peacefully raising families and contributing to our state," Castro said.

Earlier Friday, an ICE officer was injured while making an arrest in northwest Austin.

Immigration Raids In Central, South Texas Part Of 'Operation Cross Check'

Corpus Christi (TX) Caller-Times, February 10, 2017

A U.S. congressman confirmed Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids are part of an operation that spans through south and central Texas.

U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro tweeted and took to Facebook Friday afternoon expressing his concern regarding peppered reports of raids throughout the state.

Castro said the agency's San Antonio field office has "launched a targeted operation."

"I'm asking ICE to clarify whether these individuals are in fact dangerous, violent threats to our communities, and not people who are here peacefully raising families and contributing to our state," Castro's statement reads. "I will continue to monitor this situation."

Justin Tullius, managing attorney for the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services' South Texas branch, said he's familiar with Operation Cross Check.

"It's ICE's name for a recurring operation to arrest people in the community with criminal conviction or deportation orders," Tullius said.

In the past, that's included those with years old convictions and people who may have missed a court date.

The American Immigration Lawyers Association issued a statement saying it has learned the operation focuses on three populations: fugitives, or anyone with an outstanding order of removal; individuals who reentered after they were deported; and "criminal aliens," or those with a criminal conviction.

Castro's statement about the latest raids came as teachers in the Austin school district handed out information to students with tips on what to do if ICE agents visited their homes or questioned them, according to an Austin American-Statesman report.

An ICE spokeswoman released a statement to the Caller-Times noting that while the agency won't confirm the existence of any operation prior to its completion that all enforcement activities "are conducted with the same level of professionalism and respect that ICE officers exhibit every day."

Targeted enforcement operations are done regularly to apprehend "deportable foreign nationals."

"Reports of ICE checkpoints and sweeps are false, dangerous and irresponsible. These reports create mass panic and put communities and law enforcement personnel in unnecessary danger," according to the ICE statement. "Any groups falsely reporting such activities are doing a disservice to those they claim to support."

State Rep. Eddie Rodriguez, an Austin Democrat whose district is nearly 63 percent Hispanic, has been in touch with Congressman Castro's office and is concerned about the reports he's received, a spokesman said.

"We are reminding our constituents to stay vigilant, and to know their rights in case they have any encounters with ICE officers," said Alejandro Pena in Rodriguez's district office at the Texas Capitol. "This is something we'll be watching all weekend. It's an all-hands-on-deck situation."

Like Castro, Austin Councilman Greg Casar also took to the social media to discuss the raids. In a Facebook post he noted that he'd confirmed that in the past 24 hours ICE agents had shown an added presence in Austin, specifically in the North Lamar and Rundberg area.

Casar added he planned to speak to residents of his district to ensure "constituents are aware of their rights." He also asked for bilingual volunteers.

"ICE actions like these are beyond reprehensible. They instill fear in the community, and they make everyday people fear for their lives," Casar wrote in the post.

Everyone living in the United States has certain basic rights under the U.S. Constitution. Undocumented immigrants have these rights, too:

You have the right to remain silent.

You may refuse to speak to immigration officers.

You have the right to speak to a lawyer.

Before you sign anything, talk to a lawyer.

To be allowed to enter your home, Immigration and Customs Enforcement must have a warrant signed by a judge.

Always carry with you any valid immigration document you have.

ICE Claims Calif. Immigration Raids Were Planned Before Trump Orders

San Francisco Chronicle, February 12, 2017

Immigration and Customs Enforcement pushed back against claims that a series of raids supposedly targeting criminals in several states were connected to President Donald Trump's executive orders. ICE's field office director said an enforcement sweep in California was already being planned before the new administration's executive orders. The agency said more than 160 people were arrested in the five-day operation in the Los Angeles area. / MediaOS Video

ICE Officer Injured While Making Arrest In Northwest Austin

KXAN-TV Austin (TX), February 10, 2017

Three suspects are now in custody after a disturbance in northwest Austin involving an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer Friday morning.

The situation began as a traffic stop around 6:05 a.m. at US 183 and Woodland Village Drive. Austin police say an immigration officer pulled over a man for a traffic stop that resulted in the ICE officer calling Austin Police Department officers for assistance.

Interim Austin Police Department Chief Brian Manley says initial 911 calls to the department indicated the ICE officer's life could be in danger. "Comments made by the ICE agent [said that the] suspect was grabbing his gun or touching his gun."

When the APD officers arrived at the scene, they also found two women with warrants out for their arrest, whom they apprehended. Investigators have not said how the suspects were connected.

"Both females had warrants for their arrests for open container—these were Class C offenses," explains Manley.

A spokesperson for ICE released a statement stating the ICE officer was injured while he was arresting a "criminal alien." The officer was treated and released from the hospital.

"This was a situation where ICE agents, federal agents, were here conducting an operation. They have full jurisdiction and they're allowed to do that and they got in a circumstance where they needed help and we will always help a fellow officer especially when we're receiving the reports we received today," Manley says.

In a statement, Austin City Council Member Greg Casar said there has been a "large amount" of Immigration and Customs Enforcement actions in the North Lamar and Rundberg area in the last 24 hours.

"ICE actions like these are beyond reprehensible. They instill fear in the community, and they make everyday people fear for their lives," said Casar.

ICE says they do not conduct random sweeps and that all ICE operations are based on investigative leads.

They have sent letters to people with warrants for violations as minor as unpaid parking tickets asking them to pay their fines. Offenders have until Feb. 25 to pay their fines.

The goal is to get people to voluntarily contact the courts and resolve their obligations before they are tracked down by police.

Starting on Feb. 26, police will go out and begin rounding up people who owe money.

All of the money collected will go to the general revenue fund.

Arrests Made In Separate Overnight Protests Against ICE Operations

KXAN-TV Austin (TX), February 12, 2017

Police arrested two people in separate protests in Austin against recent increases in ICE operations early Sunday morning.

One person was arrested for throwing lit fireworks into an Austin police car, setting it on fire, during a protest at Lamar Boulevard and Rundberg Lane, where immigrants illegally in the country have been arrested in recent days.

Authorities say the man who tossed the fireworks into the patrol car got into another vehicle that drove off, was followed by officers and was apprehended when he tried fleeing on foot during a traffic stop early Sunday.

He's held initially on a charge of evading arrest.

Austin police also arrested one person at the protest on Chalmers Avenue at Cesar Chavez Street for aggravated assault.

Multiple protests were held over the weekend on the targeted ICE operations that began Thursday. As part of ICE's Operation Cross Check, officers conduct the nationwide operation by detaining unauthorized immigrants convicted of crimes in the country.

According to the Mexican Consulate, ICE has arrested a total of 44 people in Austin on Thursday and Friday.

Mayor De Blasio Says His Office Stands With Undocumented Immigrants

Staten Island (NY) Live, February 12, 2017

Mayor de Blasio took to Twitter early Sunday morning, after a week of immigration-related arrests by federal officials.

Just before 6 a.m., he tweeted his office will stand with the "nearly 40 percent of New Yorkers who are foreign born--documented or undocumented."

He also tweeted that NYPD officers will never ask about immigration status.

His office then posted information for immigrants seeking legal assistance.

Five Mexican immigrants were detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials after several raids across Staten Island in February, according to Make The Road New York, a community organization with an office in Staten Island.

The arrests on Staten Island were among 40 arrests citywide, according to a statement Sunday from Steve Choi, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition.

"Shame on ICE for putting New York's immigrant communities – four million strong – in a state of panic," wrote Choi. "These arrests do nothing but tear families apart, hobble our economies, and corrode the bonds of trust that tie our communities together – all under the false pretense of "public safety."

Daniel Altschuler, a community organizer with Make The Road New York, told the Advance that all five of the Mexican immigrants detained were males, originally from Mexico – four of whom have families with children that are U.S. citizens.

The immigration status of the individuals could not be confirmed as of Sunday morning.

Christie Defends Trump Immigration Raids Deporting Parents Of Minor U.S. Citizens

NJ News, February 12, 2017

Gov. Chris Christie on Sunday defended President Donald Trump's order for weekend immigration raids in six states in which unauthorized immigrants without any violent criminal past were deported along with gang members being targeted.

The president on Sunday tweeted that the immigration and customs enforcement raids cracking down on the estimated 11 million immigrants living here illegally were aimed at violent felons.

However, appearing on CNN's "State of the Union with Jake Tapper" on Sunday, Christie was informed that some of those "others" deported were otherwise law-abiding residents who'd been working in the U.S. for decades and raising children who are U.S. citizens.

Tapper then asked the governor for what his message was to the more than 400,000 "undocumented immigrants in New Jersey, your home state, who are not drug dealers, who are not gang members, who have not committed any sort of violent crimes, who have children who are American and are now in fear?"

The governor struck a decidedly different tone than he had in the past.

He blamed both the Bush and Obama administrations for their past inaction on immigration reform, and offered little in the way of sympathy to those swept up in the ICE raids.

"This is the problem with the whole failure of the federal government over the course of the last 12 to 16 years," Christie said. "When that's the case, then the laws that are in effect right now have to be enforced."

Non-violent but nonetheless unauthorized immigrants might deported as well, Christie indicated.

"I can tell you, Jake, from having run a government for seven years and been involved for many years as a U.S. attorney, things always don't go perfectly ... and so you're going to have some people who, by the way, have violated the law, but don't fit that one category."

Trump 'ill-served' by advisers in travel ban rollout, Christie says

The governor did not share Trump's immigration priorities when he was a presidential candidate or a U.S. attorney.

As he was readying the launch of his own presidential bid in 2015, Christie called for first resolving the legal status of unauthorized immigrants whose only violation of the law was coming to the U.S. to work.

"None of them has ever come to me and said, 'Governor the reason I came here was to vote.' They said they came here to work," Christie told CNN in April 2015, "So let's deal with the work situation first and then we will deal with everything else."

On Sunday, Christie said that the people of New Jersey "should focus on is what the president is trying to do, which is to keep a campaign promise on making sure that violent criminals who are here illegally are taken out of the country in order to make America's streets safer."

However, when Christie was serving as U.S. Attorney and a Republican candidate for governor, he had strongly criticized Morristown Mayor Donald Cresitello's call for tough enforcement of immigration laws by having police officers granted the power to enforce them.

Speaking before a largely Latino audience in Dover in 2008, Christie said that "being in this country without proper documentation is not a crime" and noted that illegal presence is a violation of U.S. civil, not criminal, code.

He later called Cresitello "stupid" for doing so, and termed his demands to deport unauthorized immigrants who came to work in the U.S. "hyperbole and grandstanding and demagoguery."

But on Sunday, the governor offered a much stricter view of immigration enforcement.

"If they don't like the federal law, they should go to Congress and get it changed," Christie said.

Immigration Officials Call 161 Arrests In SoCal Routine In Wake Of Increased Enforcement Fears

Southern California Public Radio, February 10, 2017

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials announced Friday they have arrested 161 people in six Southern California counties over the past five days, insisting that the latest actions are part of their periodic enforcement operations.

Calling the latest arrests an "enforcement surge," they said they targeted immigrants with criminal histories, as they have done for the past few years.

David Marin, field office director for ICE enforcement and removal operations in the Los Angeles area, told reporters on a conference call Friday that any reports of mass arrests are false and creates panic in the community.

"The rash of these recent reports about ICE checkpoints and random sweeps and the like — it is all false, and it is definitely dangerous and irresponsible because reports like that create a panic, and they put communities and law enforcement at risk," he said.

Marin said ICE did not target any so-called "sanctuary cities" for enforcement. He said the arrests occurred in six of the seven counties of his agency's coverage area and the operation was planned prior to Trump taking office.

But he also complained that his agency's job has gotten more difficult because of recent legislation passed by state and local governments, some of which forbid local law enforcement agencies from assisting in immigration enforcement.

Officials said they had no specific orders from President Donald Trump's administration to carry out the raids. Shortly after taking office, the president signed an executive order targeting any immigrants living in the country illegally as priorities for deportation, particularly those with outstanding deportation orders, the Associated Press reported.

The order also listed as priorities convicted criminals, those arrested for any criminal offense, those who committed fraud and anyone who may have committed a crime.

The Washington Post reported Friday that authorities launched a "series of raids, traffic stops and checkpoints" in about six states Thursday and Friday, citing attorneys and immigrant advocates as sources for the reports.

But the AP said it is unclear if the latest actions are tied to Trump's order.

On Thursday, some Los Angeles immigration attorneys and advocates said 100 people were arrested in a day and detained at the Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown L.A. — a figure that ICE dismissed as grossly exaggerated.

The reports fed fears running high in the Los Angeles area that immigration agents are stepping up efforts to find and deport immigrants.

Mayor Eric Garcetti of Los Angeles, among the sanctuary cities, issued a statement that he talked to an ICE official and asked that ICE needs more transparency about its ongoing operations.

"Angelenos should not have to fear raids that are disruptive to their peace of mind and bring unnecessary anxiety to our homes, schools, and workplaces," the mayor's statement read.

He said the Trump administration should take a "just, humane, and sensible approach that does not cause pain for people who only want to live their lives and raise their families in the communities they call home."

Even while ICE officials tried to alleviate fears about ramped up arrests, immigration advocates remained wary.

Angelica Salas with CHIRLA, the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, said she's heard too many reports of arrests for the current situation to be business as usual.

"We know what the pattern is around coordinated mass activity. And this is what coordinated mass activity looks like, where you have family members, attorneys, different people reporting this activity to us," said Salas.

Salas said on a typical day, her group may receive just a couple of arrest reports, sometimes none, but that number has picked up this week.

ICE officials said of those arrested in Southern California this week, 150 had some kind of criminal record, 75 percent of them with felony convictions and the rest with misdemeanor convictions. Of those who did not have records, five had final deportation orders or had been previously deported. The others were described as living in the country illegally.

Among those picked up, according to CHIRLA, was a Van Nuys man named Manuel Mosqueda, who had a prior deportation order but did not have a criminal record.

At the CHIRLA office Friday morning, his daughter Marlene Mosqueda described getting a phone call from her father's fiancée after he was arrested at his home.

"She was crying, and she was telling me that they came in, they wanted to ask questions," she said. "The moment that he came out, they told him sit there, you stay there … from there, they just asked for everybody's identification."

She and CHIRLA staff said they believe agents came to the home looking for someone else, but ended up questioning the occupants, "and they ended up taking my dad," Mosqueda said.

Her father remains detained. Attorneys intervened on his behalf to stay his deportation and take his case before an immigration judge.

ICE officials have conducted periodic sweeps in recent years as local jurisdictions and some states – including California – have dialed back cooperation with federal immigration agents, refusing to hold immigrants who can otherwise be released. ICE has deployed "fugitive operations" teams to track down people who are released from local jails.

One similarly large operation by ICE in August 2015 under the Obama administration led to more than 240 arrests in Southern California over a week.

But there's a change in attitude, said CHIRLA staff attorney Karla Navarrete. She said Friday that when she went to a downtown holding facility Thursday to file paperwork on behalf of someone who was arrested, an officer there told her "things have changed."

FOIA CBP 000769

"I think the difference is that we are in a different era," Navarrette said. "That it's been clear that there is a goal to deport 8 million people." That is a reference to President Trump's pledge to deport millions of unauthorized immigrants, which by one estimate by the Los Angeles Times could reach up to 8 million people.

In comparison, more than 2 million people were deported during Obama's administration, according to the Associated Press.

As Feds Arrest 40 Immigrants, Protesters Demand De Blasio Take Action To Protect New Yorkers

Village Voice (NY), February 12, 2017

Immigrations and Customs Enforcement has confirmed that it arrested nearly 40 immigrants in the greater New York area over the past week. While ICE claims that the arrests were part of "routine, daily targeted operations," the number represents an uptick in the amount of arrests compared to periods of routine enforcement during the Obama administration.

While he has promised to protect New York City's status as a sanctuary city, Mayor Bill de Blasio has maintained his support for cracking down on low-level offenses as part of a Broken Windows policing strategy. Earlier this month, the mayor told state lawmakers that he'd look into expanding the list of 170 offenses in which the NYPD would cooperate with ICE to deport New Yorkers.

Hundreds of protesters rallied in Washington Square Park on Saturday afternoon against the NYPD's use of Broken Windows policing, which puts New York City's immigrants directly at risk under President Trump's executive order seeking to eliminate sanctuary cities.

"We need to draw a line between what is real resistance, and what is a fake resistance," said Karina Garcia, an organizer with the ANSWER coalition. "We want to hold the mayor accountable for not just his nice words, but for his actions. We've seen the gap between his nice words and his actions. We need a fundamental shift in policing. We cannot claim to be a sanctuary city when police flood immigrant communities with cops who are racking up summonses and arrests in huge numbers."

The ICE arrests came against the backdrop of increased enforcement nationwide and amid inaccurate rumors of ICE checkpoints throughout the city. President Trump's Public Safety Executive Order, signed on January 25, emphasizes that ICE should now arrest every undocumented individual who is even charged with a crime or who has engaged in conduct that could be construed as a crime, regardless if they have criminal convictions against them. Trump's order also prioritizes for removal green card holders, who have prior criminal convictions, no matter how long ago in the past, who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

"We have to be out in the streets every goddamn day until Broken Windows is a thing of a past," said Imani Henry, an organizer at Equality for Flatbush. "They have to know we're woke and we're ready."

Saturday's rally, which organizers dubbed, "Here to Stay, No Nos Vamos," featured speakers who repeatedly chastised the mayor for consistently failing to understand that people being arrested are eventually being deported because of policies he himself has put in place.

"If you want to call this city a 'sanctuary city,' it starts with taking power away from the police and bringing it back to the communities," said Milton Trujillo, an organizer with ICE-FREE QUEENS.

After the rally, protesters marched out of Washington Square Park and into Greenwich Village, where they circled the NYPD's 6th Precinct. As the march attempted to cross the street at Hudson and Grove, the NYPD identified five leaders of the march who were not, to this reporter, breaking any laws. One officer tackled a man into a snowbank in the gutter, then held his face into the snow as his hands were zip-tied.

The NYPD tells the Voice that four of those arrested were charged with "crossing against a steady red light" and given summonses, while a fifth person, Walter "Hawk" Newsome, a leader of Black Lives Matter — Greater New York, was charged with "obstructing governmental administration" and "resisting arrest."

As speakers at the rally pointed out, "obstructing government administration" is one of the 170 offenses that the NYPD will cooperate with ICE under the city's detainer law.

Firework Set Off Inside Police Car During ICE Protests

Austin (TX) American Statesman, February 13, 2017

A person smashed the rear window of an unoccupied Austin police patrol car and threw a lit firework inside it early Sunday near the site of recent protests against immigration enforcement operations in the area, police officials said.

The Austin Fire Department is investigating the incident, which took place around 3 a.m. near the intersection of N. Lamar Boulevard and Rundberg Lane and set the interior of the patrol car on fire.

According to the Austin police, officers saw a person damage the patrol car, and then leave as a passenger in another car. The suspect ran from officers on foot after they pulled the car over, but was eventually detained.

So far the suspect has only been charged with evading arrest, police officials said. The investigation of the patrol car fire is still ongoing.

A traffic cone was also set on fire around the same time in the area.

On Friday evening, more than 100 people gathered at the intersection of Rundberg and Lamar to protest a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement operation launched last week to capture unauthorized immigrants with criminal records. A smaller group of protesters returned to the area Saturday afternoon, and more showed up a third time Saturday night.

In a separate incident at the site of a protest near the intersection of E. Cesar Chavez Street and Chalmers Avenue, an individual was arrested Saturday evening for aggravated assault, police said.

Operation Cross Check: U.S. Congressman Confirms ICE Raids In Austin Part Of Bolstered Enforcement Effort

Downstream Austin-UT (TX) Patch, February 10, 2017

A U.S. Congressman from Texas confirmed Friday that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is, indeed, conducting a round-up of undocumented immigrants in Austin — an initiative dubbed "Operation Cross Check" that has so far netted more then 40 undocumented immigrants throughout the city.

Congressman Joaquín Castro, who represents District 20 in Texas, issued a statement on Friday confirming growing reports of bolstered ICE enforcement in the city this week.

"I have been informed by ICE that the agency's San Antonio field office has launched a targeted operation in South and Central Texas as part of Operation Cross Check," Castro said in a prepared statement. "I am asking ICE to clarify whether these individuals are in fact dangerous, violent threats to our communities, and not people who are here peacefully raising families and contributing to our state. I will continue to monitor this situation."

There have been several reports of people being detained by ICE agents throughout Austin, some confirmed others hearsay. At a vigil staged Thursday night in front of a federal building, one woman from Honduras tearfully explained to a gathering of her own husband's detention that morning as he set out for his landscaping job that morning.

Castro's missive effectively ends speculation as to whether ICE was actually conducting bolstered ICE raids in the city, an offshoot of Donald Trump's call for crackdowns on foreign migration. Even interim Police Chief Brian Manley said during a news conference he was unsure whether or not federal immigration officials had stepped up enforcement efforts.

"I've heard the stories out there, but they don't check in with us, they don't have to check in with us," Manley said of ICE, explaining the federal agency has jurisdiction over Austin and thus no need to alert local law enforcement of their presence ahead of time. "So I don't know if ICE is operating at higher or lower levels than they had in months and years past," he said during an afternoon press conference.

Rumors had swirled of an ICE crackdown in Austin days before they actually occurred, as Patch reported Feb. 3. Those rumors posited the raids occurring that weekend, but the first confirmed reports of detentions emerged this week.

The Mexican consulate also confirmed the bolstered ICE activity locally, telling media outlets that 44 Mexican immigrants have been detained in the past 48 hours in Austin. The number of total detentions could be much higher, given the cultural diaspora to be found in Austin; the landscaper detained Thursday morning, for example, is a Honduras native.

In March 2015, a same-named, five-day operation took place throughout the country netting 2,059 convicted criminals, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, although it's unclear if this week's initiative is related to that effort. The 2015 operation was led by ICE and Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), according to a news advisory issued that year.

"This nationwide operation led to the apprehension of more than 2,000 convicted criminal aliens who pose the greatest risk to our public safety," said then-Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas. "Today, communities around the country are safer because of the great work of the men and women of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement."

Also dubbed "Cross Check," the initiative began Sunday, March 1, and ended Thursday, March 5 in 2015.

Hundreds of ERO officers participated in the operation focusing arrests of public safety threats, according the the DHS advisory at the time. Those arrested originated from 94 countries, and had a wide array of criminal convictions, officials said. More than 1,000 of those arrested two years ago had felony convictions, including voluntary manslaughter, child pornography, robbery, kidnapping and rape, according to DHS.

Of the total 2,059 arrested, 58 were known gang members or affiliates, and 89 are convicted sex offenders, officials said.

Castro's congressional district serves the western half of San Antonio and Bexar County in Texas. The district is heavily Latino, as is its surrounding area.

Chatter That ICE Raided Omaha Meatpacking Plant Isn't True, Spokesman Says

Omaha (NE) World-Herald, February 10, 2017

A spokesman for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said there were no arrests at any Nebraska meatpacking plants Friday.

The comment came as social media posts and community chatter made the rounds that federal agents had targeted Nebraska Beef, a meatpacking plant, in a Friday immigration raid.

ICE spokesman Shawn Neudauer said there were no arrests Friday. The agency is a division of the Department of Homeland Security.

The chief financial officer of Nebraska Beef said there had been no raid or visit from immigration enforcement officials at his facility.

"I think this is a rumor gone amok," said James Timmerman, the CFO. He said the plant had several calls about word of the raid but he didn't know what started the talk.

He said the plant, which employs about 1,000, takes steps to ensure employees are authorized to work legally in the United States, including using Homeland Security's E-Verify system. The plant also conducts a quarterly self-audit to ensure that each employee has a Form I-9 on file, he said. The form is used for verifying a worker's identity and employment authorization.

The social media chatter came as immigration lawyers and advocates reported a series of raids, traffic stops and checkpoints in a number of cities on Thursday and Friday.

Meanwhile, schools and advocacy agencies in Omaha were on alert, fielding phone calls about possible immigration operations after the social media posts sparked concern.

Gillian Christensen, a Homeland Security spokeswoman, told the Washington Post on Friday that ICE had indeed gone to homes and workplaces in Atlanta, the Los Angeles area and two other cities that she declined to identify, as part of "routine" immigration enforcement actions.

Federal Immigration Authorities Launch Raids Across The Country : NPR

NPR, February 11, 2017

Federal immigration authorities launched a new wave of raids and other actions in several states over the past five days aimed at sweeping up people who are in this country illegally.

It's not known how many people were rounded up across the country, but immigration advocates say they've received reports of raids in California, Texas, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, New York and Kansas. The ICE operations are the first to take place since President Trump issued his Jan. 26 executive order expanding the priorities for enforcement.

President Trump has promised to deport 2 to 3 million immigrants with criminal records, but immigration experts say that while the Department of Homeland Security estimates there are 1.9 million "removable criminal aliens" in the United States, only about 690,000 are in this country illegally and have been convicted of a felony or serious misdemeanor.

Preliminary reports from southern California give an indication of the scope of the ICE operations. An official with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, in southern California, David Marin, called the actions routine "surge operations" that target "priority cases," in other words, people in this country illegally who have criminal convictions.

"We made 161 arrests, and of those 161, 151 of those had prior criminal convictions. ... The majority of them were felons and those felons which had prior convictions included sex offenses, domestic violence, assault, robbery and weapons violations, just to name a few," said Marin in a press teleconference held late Friday.

Marin said that of the ten others, five had impending deportation orders or had been deported and had illegally returned to the United States. The remaining five had no criminal records, but were in this country without documents.

Immigrant advocates dispute officials' claims that the operations were routine.

"What they're trying to do is a really concerted effort to instill fear and terrorize our communities," said David Abud, an organizer with the National Day Labor Organizing Network based in Los Angeles told NPR.

"It's a way in which Trump and ICE are retaliating against sanctuary jurisdictions," he added.

As we reported in the Two-Way, the majority of people in this country illegally are concentrated in 20 metropolitan areas in the country.

The Washington Post quoted one immigration official who was not authorized to speak publicly because of the sensitive nature of the operation as saying, "Big cities tend to have a lot of illegal immigrants. They're going to a target-rich environment."

There were anecdotal reports of ICE staging traffic checkpoints and random sweeps of people suspected of being here illegally. ICE's Marin called those reports "dangerous and irresponsible."

Marin declined to discuss any connection between the raids and the president's recent executive order, except to say that the operations had been planned for weeks before that order was issued.

Immigration Raids Conducted U.S. Cities: What To Know

TIME, February 11, 2017

Hundreds of undocumented immigrants were arrested in raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials in cities across the U.S. this week — the first widespread enforcement of President Donald Trump's policy aimed at cracking down on illegal immigration.

Trump campaigned on a promise to take action against illegal immigration, pledging to deport up to 3 million undocumented immigrantsby targeting those with criminal records. Notably, experts have challengedTrump's estimates of the number of undocumented immigrants who have been convicted of crimes.

The raids took place at homes and workplaces in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, the Los Angeles area, North Carolina and South Carolina, the Washington Postreported, citing immigration officials.

Here are some key details to know:

This action follows Trump's executive order on immigration

Trump signed an executive orderlast month aimed at cracking down on illegal immigration. It set a priority of deporting any undocumented immigrant who had been charged with a crime, convicted of a crime or had "committed acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense."

But immigration officials said the recent raids were a "routine" enforcement practice.

"These are existing, established fugitive operations teams. ICE does not conduct sweeps or raids that target aliens indiscriminately," said Gillian Christensen, acting press secretary for the Department of Homeland Security, according to CNN. "ICE only conducts targeted enforcement of criminal aliens and other individuals who are in violation of our nation's immigration laws."

Raids caused panic in immigrant communities

Recent arrests and deportations have affected people who were not considered a priority for deportation under the Obama administration.

Protests broke out in Phoenix this week over the deportation of a motherwho had lived in the U.S. for 21 years and was arrested during a routine meeting with ICE on Wednesday. She had been convicted of a felony in 2008 for using a fake social security number to gain employment, but she was not previously considered a deportation priority.

Officials conducted similar raids during Obama's presidency but prioritized immigrants who were deemed a threat to national security or public safety. Still, more than 2 million people were deported under Obama, leading some critics to label him "Deporter in Chief."

The raids this week caused fear and confusion in immigrant communities, and immigrants' rights advocates argued it was different than typical law enforcement action. Some groups issued guidance for dealing with ICE officials. In Austin, Texas, teachers handed out flyers to students, explaining "what to do if ICE comes to your door," the Austin American-Statesmanreported.

Democratic leaders and lawmakers spoke out about the arrests

"Angelenos should not have to fear raids that are disruptive to their peace of mind and bring unnecessary anxiety to our homes, schools, and workplaces," Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said Friday. "The Administration should take a just, humane, and sensible approach that does not cause pain for people who only want to live their lives and raise their families in the communities they call home."

Texas Rep. Joaquin Castro confirmed there was a "targeted operation" taking place in the state and said he was "concerned"about the raids.

"I am asking ICE to clarify whether these individuals are in fact dangerous, violent threats to our communities, and not people who are here peacefully raising families and contributing to our state," he said in a statement.

The Looming Conflict Between Trump's Immigration Sweeps And Religious Freedom

By Philip Bump

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

When Guadalupe García de Rayos was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Mesa, Ariz., after the most recent of her mandated check-ins with the agency, her lawyer Ray Ybarra Maldonado was furious. On a conference call, Maldonado said that ICE had lied to him and that he would advise anyone in Rayos' shoes to seek sanctuary in a church instead of turning themselves in.

Rayos herself considered that option. Understanding that the check-in might pose a new risk during the administration of Donald Trump, allies suggested her that do so. She declined, opting instead for going to Mass and praying before she went to the ICE office.

She was deported to Mexico, leaving her two children behind.

Seeking sanctuary at a church would not have offered as much shelter as you might assume. Many of us are familiar — thanks to "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" — with the concept of taking refuge in a place of worship as a way to avoid civil authorities. While this was a doctrine that existed in some places in the past, it was never instituted by American colonists and it is not the case now that someone hoping to avoid arrest can be assured of protection in a house of worship. (Nor is it the case that so-called "sanctuary cities" offer protection from detention by federal immigration authorities, as recent raids have made clear.)

There is, however, a reason that Rayos' attorney recommended seeking refuge in a church. David Leopold, an immigration attorney from Cleveland and former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, pointed to a 2011 memorandum from then-ICE director John Morton. It established that ICE would not conduct enforcement actions in several enumerated "sensitive locations": hospitals, schools, the site of a wedding or funeral, during a demonstration or at a place of worship.

It wasn't impossible to conduct such an action; it was just that any enforcement in one of the places on the list mandated approval from a top ICE official before proceeding (except in the case of an emergency).

What makes places of worship uniquely appealing on that list, of course, is that they alone are part of the long tradition of seeking sanctuary. The concept, established more than 1,700 years ago in the Theodosian Code of 392 A.D., upholds tenets offered in the Bible. Exodus 22:21 — part of the delineation of laws following the Ten Commandments — implores readers to not mistreat or oppress foreigners. Deuteronomy 27:19 declares that those who deny justice to foreigners, orphans and widows should be cursed.

Churches, in other words, may act to protect immigrants out of a sense of religious obligation. And that is where things might get tricky for the Trump administration.

Last week, a draft executive order that was circulating in the White House was leaked to the press. Titled "Establishing a Government-Wide Initiative to Respect Religious Freedom," the draft document sides strongly with recent efforts to support the role of religious belief in commercial and legal interactions. The draft order focused on political issues that have been at the heart of that conflict, such as same-sex marriage and contraception. But it was a clear indicator that the administration supported a broad interpretation of religious freedom rights.

The most noteworthy case on this subject was Burwell vs. Hobby Lobby, determined in favor of the retail chain by the Supreme Court in 2014. Five justices agreed that the provisions of the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act meant that Hobby Lobby could not be forced to cover contraception in its health insurance for employees, despite such a mandate in the Affordable Care Act.

Liz Platt is the director of the Public Rights/Private Conscience Project at Columbia Law School. When we spoke by phone on Friday, she suggested that the new breadth of accommodation for religious liberties might make the issue of offering sanctuary trickier. She noted that offering sanctuary to immigrants living in the country illegally had been challenged in the courts previously, with the religious motivations behind the effort playing a muted role.

During the 1980s, a number of religious institutions were helping people fleeing violence in Central America to travel illegally through the United States. Some of those participating in the effort were arrested and, among other things, the question was raised of whether the arrests violated their First Amendment rights to free religious practice. They lost.

"The courts did something that would never fly today," Platt said. The courts "questioned whether their religious beliefs were really being burdened. They had some clergy members come in and say, 'Actually, there's no reason why under Christianity you would need to do this.'"

"Under the Supreme Court's decision in Hobby Lobby," by contrast, "they were super deferential to the claimants who said that their religious rights had been burdened," she continued. "Under this much, much greater deference to the religious objector and much expanded right to a religious accommodation, I think it's certainly a possibility that those cases could come out the opposite way today."

"The new, much, much broader of right to religious exemption that's provided under RFRA is going to really give them a chance to relitigate" the question of sanctuary, Platt said. She noted, too, that religion might not even be the only boundary, if the leaked executive order is any guide. The document "contained protections not only for religion, but also for conscience," she said. This raises the prospect of someone harboring an immigrant in their own homes, challenging prosecution by citing their conscientious decision to do so.

The issue of punishment for those offering sanctuary is key. Since sanctuary isn't a legal doctrine, those who offer it to immigrants in the country illegally are putting themselves at risk under statutes outlawing the harboring of undocumented immigrants. Federal code bars transporting people known to be in the country illegally or concealing, harboring or shielding those known to be undocumented — "in any place, including any building or any means of transportation." That includes places of worship.

Leopold, the immigration attorney, agreed that there might be a tension in the administration's likely priorities. "There's an inherent conflict between the harboring statutes and religious freedom in this country," he said. He suspects that this could become a significant issue under Trump, thanks in part to his attorney general.

"The law is very broad. And that's my fear," Leopold said. "My concern is that you have an attorney general in Jeff Sessions who is anti-immigrant. At this point he's the chief law enforcement officer in the country and he can use the criminal statutes to prosecute people for harboring." The penalty for being convicted of harboring someone known to be in the country illegally is five years in federal prison.

The prohibition against raiding places of worship, as outlined in 2011, is a memorandum that could be overturned at any point. There's another reason that ICE is disinterested in launching raids at places of worship, of course: Aesthetics. No head of a government agency wants to have to explain to the public why there were photographs of a priest being lead to a police vehicle in handcuffs.

"I think that if Jeff Sessions begins to prosecute people for harboring … I think there's going to be hell to pay," he said. "I think people are going to recoil at any prosecution of a church or a religious figure or parishioners for doing what they believe is their religious duty."

He compared it to recent protests at airports over Trump's immigration ban. "It's the same response that you

FOIA CBP 000774

see when people get off airplanes and are detained at the airport suddenly because they have a passport from a Muslim country," he added. "I think you'll see the same thing if you see the government going into a place of worship."

Leopold and Platt suggest that the conclusion to any debate over sanctuary might end the same way, in court. If so, the Trump administration may be torn between what it prioritizes more: Its ability to deport immigrants in the country illegally — or the right of religious Americans to stand in their way.

TriMet Responds To False Rumors Of Immigration Raids On Buses

Oregonian, February 10, 2017

TriMet took the unusual step of Friday of announcing that it doesn't cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement office, responding to apparently false rumors that federal immigration officers were targeting bus riders in Southeast Portland.

The agency said it conducted no fare enforcement operations on Thursday evening except at stations near the Moda Center and Providence Park, where the Trail Blazers and Timbers played that night. It had received no firsthand accounts of an incident involving federal officers from rider or operators, spokeswoman Mary Fetsch said

Further, it said sworn police officers in its transit police division are prohibited from enforcing federal immigration laws under Oregon's sanctuary state statute.

"We do not support targeting any of our riders or any members of our community. Period," the agency said in a statement Friday morning. "We deeply regret that these fast-spreading rumors have caused concerns about TriMet and the safety of our riders."

It had tweeted a rebuttal late Thursday:

An Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokeswoman also refuted the rumors in a written statement.

"Rumors currently being circulated that the agency is conducting random enforcement actions at Portland-area transportation hubs are completely unfounded," wrote Lori K. Haley, the spokeswoman. "The agency is working diligently to address these false reports and we urge the media not to give them credence."

She added that the agency's enforcement actions are ongoing, but "targeted and lead driven."

Posts on Twitter and Facebook claimed TriMet fare checkers were delivering people caught without fare to federal officers waiting outside the bus. At least one version was attributed the report to a person affiliated with a local media outlet, lending it some credibility among those who shared the post, though its not clear that outlet had a hand in spreading the rumors.

Some of the social media posts that helped the rumor spread have since been deleted.

Immigration officers have appeared at the Multnomah County courthouse to arrest undocumented immigrants appearing for unrelated charges, even though the county has a policy of not assisting in immigration enforcement. County officials have condemned the practice, but said it had no authority to bar the officers from areas open to the public.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials have said there is no new emphasis on arrests since the election of President Donald Trump, an immigration hardliner.

Later Friday, however, The Washington Post reported federal agents had conducted immigration raids across at least six states on Thursday and Friday in an apparent escalation since Trump took office. The federal agency acknowledged those operations.

Fetsch said immigration enforcement officers would be allowed to board a bus like any other member of the public. But TriMet has never worked with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, she said, and has no plans to.

"ICE has never been trained or participating in fare enforcement and would not know what they would be looking for if they did (try to enforce fares)," she said in an email.

Other transit agencies in sanctuary cities are concerned about drawing the attention of immigration officers.

The Bay Area's BART regional rail system has proposed a "sanctuary in transit" policy that would prohibit its own police force to limit cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement and other federal agencies.

Stephen Miller Says White House Will Fight For Travel Ban, Advances False Voter Fraud Claims

By Philip Rucker

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

The White House is pursuing several options to reinstate President Trump's travel ban on all refugees and travelers from seven majority-Muslim nations, fighting back against what one top adviser on Sunday called "judicial usurpation of power."

White House senior policy adviser Stephen Miller, the author of the controversial executive order, said the administration was simultaneously weighing several legal options after the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled unanimously on Thursday against reinstating the travel ban, which had been blocked temporarily by a federal judge in Washington state.

Miller said that officials are considering appealing with the 9th Circuit and having an emergency hearing "en banc," or before all judges on the court; seeking an emergency stay at the Supreme Court; taking the case to trial at the district

FOIA CBP 000775

level; or writing a new executive order for Trump to sign that would withstand legal scrutiny.

In unusually combative interviews on the Sunday morning television shows, Miller also refused to say whether Trump still has confidence in his national security adviser amid controversy over his communications with Russian officials. Miller also advanced false claims that widespread voter fraud undermined Trump's performance in November's election.

Miller insisted that Trump has the constitutional authority to ban the entry of certain foreigners, saying the actions represent "the very apex of presidential authority."

"I want to say something very clearly, and this is going to be very disappointing to the people protesting the president and the people in Congress, like [Senate Democratic Leader Charles E.] Schumer, who have attacked the president for his lawful and necessary action: The president's powers here are beyond question," Miller said on Fox News.

Appearing also on ABC News, Miller said, "A district judge in Seattle cannot force the president of the United States to change our laws and our Constitution because of their own personal views. The president has the power … to suspend the entry of aliens when it's in the national interest."

Miller said on CBS News that the judiciary was acting like "a supreme branch of government."

"One unelected judge in Seattle cannot make laws for the entire country," Miller told anchor John Dickerson. "I mean, this is just crazy, John. The idea that you're going to have a judge in Seattle say that a foreign national living in Libya has an effective right to enter the United States is beyond anything we've ever seen before."

Miller also suggested that the legal debate was not over the constitutionality of Trump's action, but rather over ideology.

"There is no constitutional right for a citizen in a foreign country, who has no status in America, to demand entry into our country," the adviser said on ABC. "Such a right cannot exist. Such a right will never exist. This is an ideological disagreement between those who believe we should have borders and should have controls and those who believe there should be no borders and no controls."

Miller's exchanges with the Sunday show hosts were testy on other subjects as well. He punted when ABC anchor George Stephanopolous asked him about The Washington Post's report that retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn discussed the then-Obama administration's sanctions against Russia in conversations with that country's ambassador before Flynn was sworn in as White House national security adviser.

"I don't have any news to make you today on this point," Miller said, prompting Stephanopoulos to ask, "Then why are you coming in if you can't answer the questions being posed about the White House?"

On NBC, when anchor Chuck Todd asked Miller whether Trump still had confidence in Flynn, Miller said he did not know. Miller said his colleagues in the White House "did not give me anything to say."

"It's not for me to tell you what's in the president's mind," he told Todd. "That's a question for the president."

How the 31-year-old behind Trump's travel ban forged his conservative identity in liberal Southern California

Miller also repeated the false claim that Trump underperformed in the general election because of "massive voter fraud." Miller provided no evidence to support his assertions in his ABC appearance — something Stephanopolous pointed out to viewers.

Miller repeated claims Trump made privately to senators this past week that he narrowly lost the general election in New Hampshire because thousands of Massachusetts residents were bused into New Hampshire to vote illegally there.

"I can tell you that this issue of busing voters into New Hampshire is widely known by anyone who's worked in New Hampshire politics," Miller said. "It's very real. It's very serious."

There is no known evidence of this happening.

Miller went on to say that there is "enormous evidence" of people being registered to vote in more than one state, of "dead people voting" and noncitizens being registered to vote.

"George, it is a fact — and you will not deny it — that there are massive numbers of noncitizens in this country who are registered to vote," Miller said. "That is a scandal. We should stop the presses. And, as a country, we should be aghast about the fact that you have people who have no right to vote in this country registered to vote, canceling out the franchise of lawful citizens of this country."

At that, Stephanopolous intoned: "For the record, you have provided zero evidence that the president was the victim of massive voter fraud in New Hampshire. You provided zero evidence that the president's claim that he would have won the popular vote if 3 million to 5 million illegal immigrants hadn't voted — zero evidence for either one of those claims."

Miller's combative appearances pleased his boss, who apparently was watching from Mar-a-Lago, his private club in Palm Beach, Fla. Trump tweeted: "Congratulations Stephen Miller- on representing me this morning on the various Sunday morning shows. Great job!"

Aide Says Courts Grabbed Power From Trump On Immigration Ban

By Mark Niquette

Bloomberg Politics, February 12, 2017

White House policy adviser Stephen Miller said judges on a San Francisco-based appeals court who ruled against President Donald Trump's travel ban took power that belongs

"squarely in the hands of the president" in a "judicial usurpation."

"There is no such thing as judicial supremacy," Miller said in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press," one of four appearances on Sunday talk shows after the court on Thursday ruled against the Trump administration's Jan. 27 executive order on immigration.

On "Fox News Sunday," Miller blasted "a judicial usurpation of power," and on CBS's "Face the Nation" he derided a judiciary that he said had "become in many cases a supreme branch of government."

The White House on Friday sent conflicting signals about how it would address the ruling that halted its ban on U.S. entry by citizens from seven predominantly Muslim nations – Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen – for 90 days, and also stopped the entry of all refugees for 120 days. Refugees fleeing the years-long Syrian civil war were banned indefinitely.

Yet Miller's comments suggested the administration isn't backing down on its position that courts have no business reviewing the president's actions in the immigration case.

For more on Trump's travel restrictions, click here.

Miller, whose background is in political science, said the White House is considering all options, including continuing to appeal in the 9th U.S Circuit Court of Appeals, seeking an emergency stay at the U.S. Supreme Court, having a trial hearing on the merits at the district court level, and pursuing additional executive actions.

"The president's powers here are beyond question," Miller said on Fox. The three judges on the appeals court, appointed by Presidents Jimmy Carter, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, respectively, "made a broad, overreaching statement about the ability to check the executive power."

Miller's comments dovetailed with remarks Trump has made. And the president, who's known to closely monitor the performance of his aides, liked what he saw from the 31-year-old former communications director to former Alabama senator and now Attorney General Jeff Sessions. "Congratulations Stephen Miller – on representing me this morning on the various Sunday morning shows. Great job!" Trump tweeted.So-Called Judge

On ABC's "This Week," Miller said that "a District judge in Seattle cannot force the president of the United States to change our laws and our Constitution because of their own personal views." The comments referred to federal Judge James Robart, a George W. Bush appointee, who granted a temporary restraining order against Trump's order on Feb. 3.

That ruling led to the reopening of U.S. borders to visa holders from the seven countries and spurred the State Department to reverse its cancellation of visas. The president responded by calling Robart a "so-called judge" on Twitter.

Speaking about the case, Bob Ferguson, attorney general for Washington state, said the current executive order "most certainly" is unlawful. Washington and Minnesota have led opposition to Trump's travel ban.

Four federal judges "have completely and utterly rejected the president's arguments in this case," Ferguson said on ABC's "This Week." He didn't rule out attempting to question the president under oath if there's an appeal.Refugee Screening

Miller said there were "hundreds of cases of foreign nationals" entering the U.S. and plotting terrorist attacks. Trump said Sunday on Twitter that 72 percent of the refugees admitted since the executive order was halted came from the seven countries. Refugees, who undergo a rigorous, often years-long screening process to enter the U.S., are typically fleeing their homelands claiming persecution or fear of violence.

In addition to border measures, Miller said the administration is focused on "protecting the security of our country through interior enforcement."

His comment came as U.S. immigration authorities arrested hundreds of undocumented immigrants in at least six states over the past week in a series of raids, according to the Washington Post. Actions reportedly have been taken in homes, workplaces and public spaces such as shopping-center parking lots in Atlanta, Chicago, New York and elsewhere.

Keep up with the best of Bloomberg Politics.

Get our newsletter daily. "I have been informed by ICE that the agency's San Antonio field office has launched a targeted operation in south and central Texas," Representative Joaquin Castro, Democrat of Texas, said in a statement referring to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a unit of the Department of Homeland Security. "I am asking ICE to clarify whether those individuals are in fact dangerous, violent threats to our communities and not people who are here peacefully raising families and contributing to our state."Immigration Sweeps

The sweeps were the first large-scale moves under Trump's Jan. 25 order to crack down on the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. by prioritizing deportation of those who have been convicted of a criminal offense or pose a risk to national security. Those arrested included individuals without criminal records, the Washington Post and other media reported.

Asked on NBC if being in the country illegally, without having committed other crimes, was enough to warrant deportation, Miller said, "an immigration judge makes those decisions. An ICE officer makes those decisions. I and the White House don't make those decisions."

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, a former Republican presidential candidate, said any concerns about

FOIA CBP 000777

people getting deported who aren't violent criminals have to do with flaws in the nation's immigration laws.

"The laws that are in effect right now have to be enforced, and that's what's happening right now," Christie said on CNN's "State of the Union."

The focus of the president's order is to keep the U.S. safe, and any people getting deported who have violated the law by their status as undocumented immigrants who are not violent criminals are in an "overwhelming minority," Christie said.

Trump Is Sifting Options On Immigration Ban, Adviser Says

Stephen Miller says possible measures include a new executive order and a further appeal of court suspension

By Rebecca Ballhaus

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Stephen Miller Says White House Looking At 'all Options' Possible To Keep Trump Travel Ban Alive

By Adam Edelman, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, February 12, 2017

Just three days after a federal appeals court upheld a suspension on President Trump's travel ban, a key White House staffer and an author of the controversial executive order, indicated that the administration was actively looking at ways to keep the measure alive.

Stephen Miller, a senior policy adviser to Trump, said Sunday that "all options are on the table" regarding the White House's response to a ruling Thursday night by the San Francisco-based 9th Circuit Court of Appeals that allowed to stand a halt on the President's executive order barring travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations and limiting the nation's refugee program.

"We are considering and pursuing all options. Those options include seeking an emergency stay at the Supreme Court, continuing the appeal with the panel, having an emergency hearing en banc, or going to the trial court at the district level and trial on the merit," Miller said on "Fox News Sunday," one of three stops on the Sunday morning political talk shows.

"They also include … the possibility of new executive actions designed to prevent terrorist infiltration of our country," Miller added, before reiterating the administration's belief that Trump can do whatever he wants — simply because he is the President.

"I want to say something very clearly, and this is going to be very disappointing to the people protesting the President and the people in Congress … who've attacked the President for his lawful and necessary actions," Miller added.

"The President's powers here are beyond question," he said — directly contradicted the San Francisco court's findings.

The California panel of three judges, reviewing a decision by a federal judge in Seattle that blocked parts of the order, indeed, noted the states raised serious allegations about religious discrimination and, in plain language, rejected the Trump administration's argument that his executive orders are "unreviewable."

"There is no precedent to support this claimed unreviewability, which runs contrary to the fundamental structure of our constitutional democracy," the judges wrote.

The judges also found merit to the state's argument that the ban, barring travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations and limiting the nation's refugee program, violates the Fifth Amendment right to due process, finding that the government will have little "likelihood of success" in rejecting that argument.

Stephen Miller, a senior policy adviser to Trump, said Sunday that "all options are on the table" regarding the legality of Trump's controversial travel ban. (JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS)

"The government has not shown that the executive order provides what due process requires, such as notice and a hearing prior to restricting an individual's ability to travel," the panel wrote, adding that the White House had "not shown a likelihood of success on the merits of its appeal, nor has it shown that failure to enter a stay would cause irreparable injury."

The 29-page ruling also appeared to rule out several of Miller's suggestions Sunday, saying it was unlikely the White House's counsel had authority to amend a presidential executive order and that the government did not show how the order could be administered in parts.

Trump has vowed to pursue the case through the Supreme Court if the halt on the ban were upheld, tweeting moments after the decision was handed down Thursday, "SEE YOU IN COURT, THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION IS AT STAKE."

Miller, for his part, attempted to refute specific parts of the ruling during his media blitz Sunday, explaining on NBC's "Meet the Press" that, "what the judges did both at the ninth and at the district level was to take power for themselves that belong squarely in the hands of the President of the United States."

"The bottom line is the President of the United States … has the power to control who enters our country," he added. "And you know and I know that no foreign national living in Yemen or any other country has a constitutional right to demand entry into our country."

"We have equal branches of government in this country. The judiciary is not supreme. A district judge in Seattle cannot force the President of the United States to change their laws and our constitution because of their own personal views, he said on ABC's "This Week."

Miller also claimed that Trump had the constitutional power to "engage in conducting border control and immigration control into this country" including ordering the deportation of individuals.

That statement came amid a surge in ICE actions across the nation — including in New York City — that resulted in raids and the arrests of illegal immigrants.

The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) February 12, 2017

"Those powers are substantial. They represent the very apex of constitutional authority and so we are contemplating new and additional actions to ensure our immigration system does not become the vehicle for admitting people into our country who are hostile to its nation and its values," Miller said.

Trump meanwhile, took to Twitter to defend his ban, the ICE actions, and to throw around statistics that, while true, didn't appear to be relevant to his point.

"The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!" he posted.

"72% of refugees admitted into U.S. (2/3 -2/11) during COURT BREAKDOWN are from 7 countries: SYRIA, IRAQ, SOMALIA, IRAN, SUDAN, LIBYA & YEMEN," he added.

In fact, President Trump's suspended travel ban triggered a wave of immigration from the countries he hoped to block, data shows.

From Feb. 3-11, about 72% of the people immigrating to the country — 1,049 of the 1,462 — hail from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, according to data from the State Department's Refugee Processing Center.

Prior to Trump signing his executive order on Jan. 27, 58% of this year's immigrants came from the seven countries.

The spike could be the result of the State Department and refugee resettlement agencies ramping up efforts for people from the seven countries, the New York Times reports.

With Dan Good

Trump's Power On Immigration Is 'Beyond Question,' Adviser Says

By Nicholas Loffredo

Newsweek, February 12, 2017

A senior adviser to the president continued Donald Trump's attacks on the judiciary over his suspended travel ban while declining to indicate what legal strategy the administration will pursue to enforce the president's executive order.

Stephen Miller, senior policy adviser to Trump, called the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling on the president's ban on Syrian refugees and travel from seven Muslim-majority countries a "judicial usurpation" of Trump's power and a "violation of judges' proper roles in litigating disputes" in an appearance on "Fox News Sunday" with Chris Wallace. While reiterating many comments made by the president himself on the Ninth Circuit's ruling, Miller defended the president's repeated criticisms of District Court Judge James Robart, who issued the initial ruling staying the travel ban. "Statements that you can't criticize a judge demonstrate a profound misunderstanding of what it means to have separate and equal branches. Of course, one branch can criticize another branch of government," Miller said.

Trump's order, which he has claimed is necessary for national security, remains unenforced nationwide, while separate legal challenges to the directive proceed in multiple jurisdictions. The administration has wavered when asked its next steps, and Miller said Sunday that all options are open.

"Those options include seeking an emergency stay with the Supreme Court, continuing the appeal with the panel, having an emergency hearing en banc, or going to the trial court in the district level and a trial on the merits. They also include...the possibility of new executive actions designed to prevent terrorist infiltration of our country," Miller said.

Should the suit go to trial, Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson said on ABC's "This Week" that he'll use "every tool" at his disposal to uncover "what truly motivated" the president's directive.

Miller also supported the Justice Department argument that Trump—and Trump alone—has the power to change immigration regulations, without review by the court system.

"The president's powers here are beyond question," Miller said. "The bottom line is the president's powers, in this area, represent the apex of executive authority," he said in a separate appearance on ABC's "This Week." The Ninth Circuit emphatically rejected that argument, finding that, "There is no precedent to support this claimed unreviewability, which runs contrary to the fundamental structure of our constitutional democracy."

In his appearances, Miller repeatedly cited Article 2 of the Constitution and immigration law to argue the "president has the authority to impose moderate, necessary and sensible restrictions, including putting in place new vetting procedures to protect this country. That power was delegated to him explicitly by Congress, and adheres to him under its Article 2 powers under the U.S. Constitution." However, he doesn't mention the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which forbids restrictive policies based on race, sex, nationality or place of birth or residence.

"This is a judicial usurpation of the power. It is a violation of judges' proper roles in litigating disputes. We will fight it," Miller said.

"In the end, the powers of the president of the United States will be reaffirmed, and the whole world will see clearly and unmistakably...that this country will protect its borders."

The president was pleased with Miller's defense of the administration. "Congratulations Stephen Miller- on representing me this morning on the various Sunday morning shows. Great job!," Trump tweeted Sunday morning.

White House Official Attacks Court After Legal Setbacks On Immigration

By Doina Chiacu And Julia Harte

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

White House Still Weighing Options On Travel Ban, Looking Toward Restrictions On Work Visas, Top Aide Says

By Laura King

Los Angeles Times, February 12, 2017

President Trump's senior policy adviser says the administration is still "considering all our options" in the legal fight over Trump's travel moratorium.

Policy adviser Stephen Miller also pointed toward an expected move by the administration to cut back on H1B visas, which are issued for foreigners to work in specialty occupations. The high-tech industry is heavily reliant upon such workers.

"I believe that we should have a program in which American workers are given jobs first," Miller said in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"If you have an open job in this country, a U.S. citizen or existing legal permanent resident ought to have the ability to make the first application for that job."

The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, based in San Francisco, dealt a blow to the president's policies last week by refusing to reinstate his temporary ban on travel from seven mostly Muslim countries. The government has 14 days to respond to that decision.

Miller said various legal scenarios were being weighed, including an appeal in the 9th Circuit or seeking an emergency stay at the Supreme Court.

"And yes, you could pursue additional executive actions," said Miller, a principal author of the controversial travel ban. Administration officials indicated Friday that in the next few days, Trump could issue a new executive order, written to avoid the legal problems the current order has encountered.

"The bottom line is that we are pursuing every single possible action to keep our country safe from terrorism," Miller said.

He also renewed the White House attack on what the president and senior aides have characterized as overreach by the courts. Trump had earlier referred to James Robart, the U.S. District judge in Seattle who initially blocked enforcement of the travel ban, as a "so-called judge."

"There's no such thing as judicial supremacy," Miller said in the NBC interview, adding that judges at both the district and appeals court level had taken "power for themselves that belong squarely in the hands of the president of the United States."

Aide Stephen Miller Takes Vigorous Trump Defense To TV Sunday Shows

By David Jackson

USA Today, February 12, 2017

Stephen Miller is getting his close-up.

President Trump's 31-year-old senior adviser, whose influence and public profile appear to be on the rise, hit the talk show circuit Sunday to promote his boss and the policies he has had a hand in shaping, including the ongoing court case over Trump's proposed ban on travel from seven Muslim countries.

"The President of the United States has accomplished more in just a few weeks than many Presidents do in an entire administration," Miller told CBS' Face The Nation, citing orders to reduce regulations and set new government ethics requirements and Trump's direct negotiations with businesses over jobs.

As for the travel ban, Miller echoed the president's attacks on judges who have blocked enforcement of the order, arguing that it is necessary to protect the country from terrorism.

"In the end, the powers of the president of the United States will be re-affirmed," Miller told Fox News Sunday.

Miller said the administration is evaluating all of its options in the wake of the adverse decision by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Options range from seeking an emergency stay at the Supreme Court to re-writing the original order restricting entry to the U.S., or perhaps some combination.

Saying that the president has absolute authority to protect the nation's borders, Miller told NBC's Meet The Press: "What the judges did both at the ninth and at the district level was to take power for themselves that belong squarely in the hands of the president of the United States."

On ABC's This Week, Miller backed Trump's unproven claims on voter fraud, including unsubstantiated allegations that voters were bused from Massachusetts to New Hampshire to vote in that state's close presidential election.

Pressed for proof, Miller said: "I can tell you that this issue of busing voters in to New Hampshire is widely known by anyone who's worked in New Hampshire politics."

The claim was quickly dismissed by New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen.

In past weeks, more prominent aides like presidential counselor Kellyanne Conway, White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, and press secretary Sean Spicer have represented the administration on the Sunday talk shows.

This Sunday it was Miller's turn, another sign of the rise of a once-obscure Senate aide who embraced Trump's attacks on illegal immigration and "political correctness," and his promotion of economic nationalism and "America First."

Miller's performance won praise from the boss. Trump tweeted: "Congratulations Stephen Miller- on representing me this morning on the various Sunday morning shows. Great job!"

A native of California, Miller grew up building his conservative bona fides, including public attacks on what he called the "PC" culture of his high school (in Santa Monica) and college (Duke).

The conservative talk show regular eventually made his way to the staff of one of his favorite senators: Jeff Sessions of Alabama, now Trump's attorney general. He became known as an aggressive advocate and e-mailer on Sessions' behalf, particularly on immigration issues.

In a recent profile of Miller, The New York Times said "the ascent of Mr. Miller from far-right gadfly with little policy experience to the president's senior policy adviser came as a shock to many of the staff members who knew him from his seven years in the Senate. A man whose emails were, until recently, considered spam by many of his Republican peers is now shaping the Trump administration's core domestic policies with his economic nationalism and hard-line positions on immigration."

Read more:

As Sessions prepared to become the first senator to endorse Trump early in the presidential campaign, Miller joined the campaign staff and quickly bonded with the candidate.

For Trump, Miller served as both speech writer and speech maker, delivering warm-up remarks at many Trump rallies. In both roles, Miller echoed Trump's political themes, from "America First" to attacks on free trade. Like Trump — and sometimes even more stridently — Miller told supporters that globalization and free trade were robbing them of the jobs, with the support and connivance of the political elite in Washington, D.C.

During a summer rally in Dallas, Miller said that people who oppose Trump "are responsible for our open borders, for our shrinking middle class, for our terrible trade deals ... Everything that is wrong with this country today, the people who are opposed to Donald Trump are responsible for!"

The Washington Post's take on Miller: "Today, at 31, he has emerged alongside former Breitbart News chief Stephen K. Bannon as a chief engineer of Trump's populist 'America first' agenda that has roiled the Washington debate over immigration and trade and sparked alarm among traditional U.S. allies abroad."

On Fox News Sunday, Miller said that Trump won the presidency "by being a champion for people who haven't had a voice in Washington."

WH Policy Adviser: Trump 'pursuing All Options' On Travel Ban

By Tom Howell Jr.

Washington Times, February 12, 2017

President Trump is "pursuing all options" in the wake of an appeals court decision against his extreme vetting order, White House policy adviser Stephen Miller said Sunday, arguing the three-judge panel got it all wrong.

"The president's powers here are beyond question," Mr. Miller told Fox News Sunday.

California's 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last week upheld a restraining order against Mr. Trump's decision to temporarily halt refuge programs and block migrants from seven predominantly Muslim nations — Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, Sudan, Libya and Yemen — from entering the U.S. until stronger vetting could be implemented.

The president is considering a new executive order on immigration as early as Monday, in response to the courts halting his earlier move.

Mr. Miller said the president has multiple options, including seeking an emergency stay before the Supreme Court, petitioning for a review by a fuller slate of judges on the 9th Circuit or demanding a trial on the merits at the district court level.

Mr. Miller said judges who've opposed the president so far are guilty of overreaching.

"The bottom line is is that we are pursuing every single possible action to keep our country safe from terrorism," Mr. Miller told NBC's "Meet the Press." "And I also want to be clear, we've heard a lot of talk about how all the branches of government are equal. That's the point. They are equal. There's no such thing as judicial supremacy. What the judges did both at the ninth and at the district level was to take power for themselves that belong squarely in the hands of the president of the United States."

Mr. Trump, who is known to keep tabs on his aides' TV performances, said he was pleased with Mr. Miller's defense.

"Congratulations Stephen Miller — on representing me this morning on the various Sunday morning shows. Great job!" Mr. Trump said on Twitter.

FOIA CBP 000781

Congratulations Stephen Miller- on representing me this morning on the various Sunday morning shows. Great job! — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) February 12, 2017

Mr. Trump also has used Twitter to lash out at judges who've opposed his order, suggesting they would be responsible for any terror attacks that occur while his extreme vetting program is on ice.

On Sunday, Mr. Trump said 72 percent of refugees admitted into the U.S. during the "COURT BREAKDOWN" since Feb. 3 are from the seven countries on his ban list.

Sen. Ben Cardin, Maryland Democrat, said the U.S. should be more targeted in its anti-terrorism efforts. For instance, it could focus on people who might self-radicalize instead of freezing out refugees or imposing a blanket ban on specific nations, saying it gives Islamic radical groups another recruiting tool.

"We really need to have a smart policy, and we already have extreme vetting for refugees particularly," Mr. Cardin told "Fox News Sunday."

Copyright © 2017 The Washington Times, LLC. Click here for reprint permission.

Trump Adviser Stephen Miller Disastrously Tries To Defend Trump

Yet he also said, "It's not for me to speak what's in the president's mind."

By Marina Fang

Huffington Post, February 12, 2017

Stephen Miller, President Donald Trump's senior policy adviser, made the rounds on Sunday's political talk shows to defend the administration's stance on several major issues. It did not go well.

On ABC's "This Week," he vigorously defended — but provided no evidence to support — Trump's lie that "millions" of people had voted illegally.

"I'm prepared to go on any show, anywhere, any time and repeat it and say the president of the United States is correct, 100 percent," he said.

After pressing Miller several times to no avail, host George Stephanopoulos ended the segment.

"You have provided zero evidence of the president's claim that he would have won the popular vote if 3 to 5 million illegal immigrants hadn't voted, zero evidence for either one of those claims," Stephanopoulos said. "Thanks a lot for joining us this morning."

Joshua Roberts / Reuters White House senior adviser Stephen Miller made the rounds on Sunday's political shows.

And like the president, Miller undermined the legitimacy of the judicial branch. He slammed the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals for ruling unanimously on Thursday to reject the Trump administration's appeal on its executive order banning refugees and immigrants from seven majority-Muslim countries.

Miller, who was influential in drafting the ban, told CBS News' John Dickerson that it was "crazy" for judges to rule on the constitutionality of laws. He also reiterated criticism of Judge James Robart, the Seattle-based federal judge who halted the ban earlier this month.

"One unelected judge in Seattle cannot make laws for the entire country," he said. "I mean, this is just crazy, John. The idea that you're going to have a judge in Seattle say that a foreign national living in Libya has an effective right to enter the United States is beyond anything we've ever seen before."

On "Fox News Sunday," Miller accused the three judges on the 9th Circuit Court of "having a long history of overreaching" and characterized their decision as "a judicial usurpation of the power." Several courts have ruled against the Trump administration over the ban.

Miller also tried to do damage control regarding revelations that national security adviser Mike Flynn reportedly communicated with and may have met the Russian ambassador in December to discuss sanctions.

Yet Miller claimed that, on this issue, the White House "did not give me anything to say," and said that he could not speak for Trump — even though he had represented Trump on a variety of other issues throughout the morning.

"It's not for me to speak what's in the president's mind," he told NBC's Chuck Todd.

Trump seemed to indicate otherwise while praising Miller.

This article has been clarified to note conflicting reports on the extent to which Flynn communicated with the Russian ambassador.

How will Trump's first 100 days impact you? Sign up for our weekly newsletter and get breaking updates on Trump's presidency by messaging us here.

All Options Considered To Blunt Ruling Thwarting Immigrant Travel Ban

By Ken Bredemeier

Voice of America, February 12, 2017

A key aide to U.S. President Donald Trump said Sunday the White House is considering "all of our options" in an effort to blunt a court ruling freezing Trump's order to ban travel from seven majority-Muslim countries and block refugees from entering the United States.

Senior policy adviser Stephen Miller said the three-week-old Trump administration is "pursuing every single possible action to keep our country safe from terrorism." Trump's 31-year-old aide told NBC's Meet the Press that he believes the president has the right to decide who can enter

the U.S. and that officials chose the seven countries "based upon the threat they assess today and in the future."

Miller said the Trump administration recognizes the equality of the three branches of the U.S. government — the White House, the court system and Congress. But Miller said there is "no such thing as judicial supremacy."

Security officers are seen outside the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals building in San Francisco, Feb. 9, 2017.

"A district judge in Seattle cannot make immigration law for the United States," Miller said, referring to the decision that blocked Trump's travel ban, which subsequently was upheld last week by a three-judge appellate panel. Miller, who played a key role in drafting the ban, said he does not believe the judge can give foreign nationals immigration rights or keep Trump from stopping refugees from entering the United States.

"No foreign national ... has a constitutional right to enter our country," Miller said.

Trump, as he headed Friday to Florida for a weekend visit at his oceanfront Mar-a-Lago retreat with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, said he is considering a "brand new order" on immigration after the appellate court unanimously ruled against him. He told reporters that a new executive order could be issued as soon as Monday or Tuesday.

Trump said such a move might be faster than defending his blocked executive order in a further court appeal. "We need speed for reasons of security," he said, although White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus said an appeal of the appellate was still under consideration.

The president said in Twitter comments over the weekend that since the initial court ruling against him February 3,72 percent of the refugees admitted into U.S. are from the seven countries where he imposed the travel ban, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, Sudan, Libya and Yemen.

"Our legal system is broken! SO DANGEROUS!" he said.

Trump, who frequently watches his aides on television news shows to see how well they handle reporters' questions, said after Miller spoke, "Congratulations Stephen Miller — on representing me this morning on the various Sunday morning shows. Great job!"

Schumer: Trump Should Throw Travel Ban 'In The Trash'

By Daniel Strauss

Politico, February 12, 2017

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer offered a recommendation Sunday: President Donald Trump should toss any travel-ban executive order "in the trash."

The comment, made by the top Senate Democrat in an interview on "Face the Nation" with CBS' John Dickerson, came in response to a question about the Trump administration looking to introduce a new executive order similar to a travel ban for seven majority-Muslim countries blocked by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Earlier, during interviews on multiple Sunday shows, White House senior policy adviser Stephen Miller suggested that the White House was looking into putting a travel plan in place through a new executive order or alternatives.

"I think he ought to throw it in the trash," Schumer said. "I think this executive order is so bad and so poisoned and its genesis is so bad and terrible that he ought to just throw it in the trash can."

Schumer gave two reasons.

"First reason, it doesn't really make us safer. It doesn't really focus on the areas where we really need to tighten up," Schumer said. The second reason, the New York Democrat continued, "is something called the visa waiver program."

"It's very easy to come to America from countries that we've always regarded as friendly. There are, I think, 27 of them," Schumer continued. "But these days there are would-be terrorists who have infiltrated places like Belgium and France, and they could come into this country much more easily than someone who's a refugee from the seven countries the president mentioned. That needs real tightening up."

Schumer went on to say the Trump executive order "is just un-American and unconstitutional."

"A religious ban just goes against the American grain. We believe in immigrants in this country, and we don't believe in a religious test," Schumer said. "And finally, it hurts us economically. When immigrants don't come to this country, it hurts our job creation, our job growth. Silicon Valley is very worried that a lot of their jobs are going to have to go to Vancouver or Canada, where Canada has a much more forward looking immigration policy."

Schumer Says Trump Should Throw Travel Ban 'In The Trash'

By Mark Moore

New York Post, February 12, 2017

A top White House adviser said Sunday the Trump administration is weighing a number of alternatives to revive the president's travel ban from seven predominately Muslim countries.

"We're considering and pursuing all options. Those options include seeking an emergency stay at the Supreme Court, continuing the appeal with the panel, having an emergency hearing en banc, or going to the trial court at the district level and trial on the merit," Stephen Miller said on "Fox News Sunday," using the legal term for a hearing before the entire federal appeals panel that decided not to reinstate the immigration ban last week.

But Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said there's one more option – toss it in the garbage.

"I think he ought to throw it in the trash," the New York democrat said on CBS' "Face the Nation." "I think this executive order is so bad and so poisoned and its genesis is so bad and terrible that he ought to just throw it in the trash can."

He went on to call the order "un-American and unconstitutional."

"A religious ban just goes against the American brain. We believe in immigrants in this country and we don't believe in a religious test," he said.

But Miller reiterated the White House's belief that Trump has the constitutional authority to "also engage in conducting border control and immigration into this country," he said.

"We do not have judicial supremacy in this country," Miller said on "Fox News Sunday." "We have three co-equal branches of government."

Miller also said the controversy over banning refugees from the seven countries – Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen – is based in ideology rather than law.

"There is no constitutional right for a citizen in a foreign country who has no status in America to demand entry into our country," Miller said on ABC News' "This Week." "Such a right cannot exist, such a right will never exist."

He also defended the nationwide roundup of undocumented immigrants over the weekend by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"We are going to follow the laws of the United States, and in following those laws, we will prioritize the removal of people who have criminal records in this country," Miller said on ABC.

Schumer On Trump Travel Ban: 'Throw It In Trash'

By Tom Howell Jr.

Washington Times, February 12, 2017

Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer on Sunday said President Trump should throw his "extreme vetting" order in the garbage instead of redrafting it or continuing to appeal court decisions that put it on hold.

The New York Democrat said Mr. Trump's attempt to temporarily halt the U.S. refugee program and block migrants from seven predominantly Muslim nations — Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, Sudan, Libya and Yemen — is "un-American," will hurt the U.S. economically and spur would-be terrorists to carry out "lone wolf" attacks.

"Its genesis is so bad and terrible he ought to just throw it in the trash can," Mr. Schumer told CBS' "Face the Nation."

Mr. Trump is considering a new executive order on immigration as early as Monday in response to the courts halting his earlier move. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last week upheld a restraining order against his first attempt.

Sen. Jeff Flake, Arizona Republican, said the order appears to be constitutional but might not achieve its goal. He said it might be time to "pause and reflect" on the best way to protect the homeland, without alienating foreign allies in the fight against radical Islamic terrorism.

"Obviously the president wants to keep the country safe," he told CBS.

Copyright © 2017 The Washington Times, LLC. Click here for reprint permission.

Reality Check: After Three Weeks, Trump Hits A Washington Wall

By Susan Page

USA Today, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — Not so fast.

In his first three weeks in office, President Trump has launched a dizzying flurry of actions, dominating the headlines and sparking controversy. But to his frustration, he has begun running smack into constraints mandated by the Constitution and imposed by political reality.

Without acknowledging he's being forced to trim his sails, the president is moving to delay some campaign promises and downsize others, steps that sometimes have been overshadowed by a continued stream of the defiant tweets that marked his political rise.

A ban on immigrants from seven majority-Muslim nations? While insisting the administration will prevail over a federal judge's decision blocking implementation of the executive order he had signed, the White House is drafting a narrower version designed to avoid some of the judicial objections. Confront China? In a phone call with Chinese President Xi Jinping late Thursday — and in a wake of a diplomatic firestorm over Trump's post-election conversation with Taiwan's leader — Trump explicitly endorsed the "one China" policy. Immediately repeal the Affordable Care Act? Now he says crafting a replacement, an issue that divides congressional Republicans, may extend into 2018.

To be sure, Trump has taken steps that have had immediate consequences, from pulling out of the Trans Pacific Partnership trade deal (though it hadn't taken effect yet) to clearing the way for the Keystone XL oil pipeline and the Dakota Access pipeline.

But he's discovering how the Constitution's structure, federal laws and rival power centers — from state governments to federal bureaucrats to foreign capitals and the news media — make leadership in the Oval Office a more complicated calculation than in the corporate suite.

"He lived in a world where, by and large, he got his way, and when he didn't get his way, he would sue people or they would sue him," Tom Cronin, a Colorado College political

scientist and co-author of The Paradoxes of the American Presidency. says, saying Trump seems "annoyed" by the steep learning curve. "He can't quite sue the Senate."

On CBS' Face the Nation Sunday, White House policy adviser Stephen Miller said the president was assessing his options on the immigration ban. "For one thing, we can take the case to the Supreme Court on the emergency stay; we can go back to the district court and we can have a hearing on the merits," he said. "Additionally, we're considering new and further executive actions that will enhance the security posture of the United States."

Trump is the first president in history never to have served in the government or the military before moving into the White House. That was a potential vulnerability he turned into an asset during the campaign, portraying himself as a no-nonsense business leader with the strength and skills to negotiate deals and manage the economy in ways that had eluded his presidential predecessors. "I alone can fix it," he declared in his speech to the Republican National Convention in July.

And he is hardly the first president who has been frustrated by the limits of his authority and the power of others. Last year, federal courts blocked an executive order signed by President Barack Obama offering some protection to an estimated 4.3 million illegal immigrants who were parents of U.S. citizens or lawful residents. In 1998, the House of Representatives impeached President Bill Clinton for perjury and obstruction of justice, though he was acquitted by the Senate.

But Trump's impatience, his combative persona and his preference for unilateral action — characteristics that may have served him well in the real-estate business — have brought more early confrontations with a sharper edge than other modern presidents in the early days of their tenure. He hasn't shown the traditional public deference for the co-equal branches of government, deriding a "so-called judge" who ruled against him in the immigration case and labeling Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer as "head clown."

It's just possible that memories of that moniker may not be helpful when Trump needs to lobby Schumer for, say, support on legislation.

"Being head of a family business is just about the worst preparation imaginable for the institutional constraints of Washington," says William Galston, a veteran of the Clinton White House staff. "Donald Trump is in for a set of experiences that will be entirely novel to him."

Read more:

So far, Trump hasn't moderated his rhetoric or tempered his tweets. On Saturday night, he bashed the news media. "I am so proud of my daughter Ivanka. To be abused and treated so badly by the media, and to still hold her head so high, is truly wonderful!" On Sunday morning, he turned his fire on billionaire Mark Cuban, a critic who endorsed Democrat Hillary Clinton for president last year. "I know Mark Cuban well," Trump wrote. "He backed me big-time but I wasn't interested in taking all of his calls.He's not smart enough to run for president!"

However, he has moderated some of his policy positions, from the timetable for repealing Obamacare to the specifics of the immigration ban. Trump told reporters he continues to believe that waterboarding was effective in interrogating terror suspects, but he said he would defer to Defense Secretary James Mattis, who opposes them. After meeting with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson last week, European Union leaders said they had been assured the United States would uphold the Iranian nuclear deal, which Trump denounced during the campaign.

The president's meeting Wednesday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will test Trump's more skeptical stance toward expanding settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Charlie Black, a Republican consultant who has known Trump for years, predicts that some of the skills the president honed negotiating real-estate deals will end up working in the Oval Office as well. "He had a lot of wins and losses," including some that demanded patience in negotiations with banks. His strengths as a salesman could be used to persuade members of Congress, he says: "He ran into barriers before. He'll have to adapt to them."

Washington's Top Lawyer Uses Strategic Streak To Fight Trump

By Gene Johnson

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

SEATTLE (AP) – The legal challenge that would launch Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson into the vanguard of resistance against President Donald Trump's travel ban was already in the works as Ferguson flew home from Florida the morning after Trump issued his executive order.

In fact, it had been planned for some time.

"We were having internal conversations about a potential action by the president along those lines," Ferguson recalled in an interview. "It wasn't like we were starting from ground zero."

The legwork paid off. Within three days, the state's lawsuit over the ban – a more sweeping challenge than other cases filed over Trump's order – had been filed. The result? First a decision from a federal judge in Seattle that blocked nationwide enforcement of the ban, then a resounding win at the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The strategic thinking that led to the victories is one of Ferguson's hallmarks, say those who have observed his career. Ferguson attributes it to spending his formative years

FOIA CBP 000785

playing competitive chess. He was a two-time state champion by his early 20s.

"Chess teaches you to anticipate your opponent's threats and moves," he said. "If your opponent makes a move that surprises you, that's a problem."

Ferguson, a boyish 51-year-old Democrat, is serving his second term as Washington's top lawyer after winning two-thirds of the vote against a Libertarian challenger last fall. The Republicans didn't field a candidate.

His office has launched significant lawsuits during his tenure, including several that made national headlines.

He has filed consumer protection lawsuits against major computer technical support and student loan companies over what he described as predatory practices; sued President Barack Obama's administration over cleanup of the Hanford nuclear reservation, where the government made plutonium for weapons; and took a florist to court for refusing to serve clients staging a gay wedding.

Last fall, Ferguson made Washington the first state to sue the agrochemical giant Monsanto over pervasive pollution from PCBs. An avid backpacker and mountain climber, he spoke of his anger that one of Washington's major rivers, the Skagit, on which his great-grandparents homesteaded in the 19th century, is now contaminated.

None of those cases generated the interest of the one challenging Trump's order halting refugees and citizens of seven Muslim-majority nations from entering the U.S. Ferguson called it unconstitutional and un-American.

Ferguson had been attending a meeting of Democratic attorneys general in Florida when the ban was announced late Friday, Jan. 27. When he landed at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on Saturday, his voicemail was full of messages alerting him to Gov. Jay Inslee's plans for a news conference at the airport to condemn the ban.

Ferguson decided to skip it and headed north to Seattle, where his team, led by state Solicitor General Noah Purcell and the head of the office's civil rights unit, Colleen Melody, was already putting together the state's lawsuit.

They worked through the weekend. Where other lawsuits had sought the release of specific travelers who had been detained on arrival in the U.S., Washington sued on its own sake – citing widespread harm to its universities, businesses, tax collections and residents.

"He's got this smartest-kid-in-your-high-school-class thing, but he's a bulldog when he wants something," Chris Vance, former head of the state Republican Party, said about Ferguson. "He's extremely politically ambitious, and he's unwilling to take no for an answer."

Ferguson was 38 during his first campaign, virtually unknown and taking on the chairwoman of the King County Council, a 20-year incumbent from his own party. That didn't sit well with the local Democratic honchos, but Ferguson says he knocked on 22,000 doors and won by 528 votes after 30,000 ballots were cast.

"I remember talking to him saying, 'Hey, Bob, come down to the Seattle Chamber of Commerce for their interview panel because you might have a shot at getting their endorsement,'" said King County Councilman Rod Dembowski, who helped run Ferguson's campaign. "He wouldn't do it because it would have taken three hours away from doorbelling."

Two years later, the council reduced its size from 13 members to nine – and the powers repaid Ferguson by eliminating his district, forcing him to run against another Democratic incumbent. He won again.

Ferguson has gone his own way as attorney general, too, perhaps no more so than in his 2013 hiring of Purcell, who's been arguing the state's case against the travel ban in court. The solicitor general position normally goes to a seasoned attorney. Purcell, a former clerk for Justice David Souter, was 33.

"That Noah was so young and had never argued in front of the U.S. Supreme Court – or even the state Supreme Court – did not go unnoticed by many folks in my office," Ferguson said.

Once his staff saw Purcell in action, though, any concerns evaporated.

Questioned about whether he's comfortable in the national spotlight, Ferguson demurred. The attention comes with the territory, he said. And though he's frequently mentioned as a possible governor, that's not on his mind right now.

"When I ran for attorney general, I used to say I felt that it was the most consequential position in state government, and people often looked at me with a strange expression," Ferguson said. "I can tell you, when I say that now, nobody gives me a funny look."

Follow Gene Johnson at https://twitter.com/GeneAPseattle .

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Washington State AG: We'll Fight New Executive Order If It 'Violates The Constitution'

By By Daniel Strauss

Politico, February 12, 2017

The attorney general for the state of Washington said Sunday that his state would fight another executive order from President Donald Trump if it violates the Constitution.

That vow, by Attorney General Bob Ferguson during an interview on "This Week" with ABC's George Stephanopoulos, follows the Trump administration's struggles to institute a travel ban on nationals from seven majority-Muslim countries. Most recently, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals refused a Justice Department request to lift a ruling by Seattle Judge James Robart blocking the ban.

Asked about the prospect of a new executive order, Ferguson left the door open to taking steps to fight that move as well.

"We'll fight if whatever they come up with violates the Constitution and is unlawful, which the current executive order most certainly is. That's my job, to make sure everyone in the country, even the president, upholds the Constitution," Ferguson said.

Ferguson also said he anticipates an additional challenge to the circuit court's ruling.

"Look, the administration, the president simply refuse to recognize what everyone else can recognize," Ferguson said. "Four federal judges have looked at this case. Two appointed by Republican presidents, two appointed by Democrats. All four have completely and utterly rejected the president's arguments in this case, and we anticipate winning as we move forward."

Stephanopoulos asked Ferguson whether he thinks U.S. law does indeed give the president "statutory basis to regulate illegal immigration and his national security responsibilities put him in a very strong position."

"Absolutely, and we recognize it. But there's another document that the president is not reading from, and that's the Constitution. Folks have rights of due process, for example, George," Ferguson said. "Of course there's broad discretion for the president, but nobody is above the law."

Trump Administration Officials May Be Deposed Over Immigration Order

By Julia Harte

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Activism Hits Even The Less Flashy Tech Companies

By David Streitfeld

New York Times, February 12, 2017

SAN FRANCISCO — As soon as President Trump signed his executive order on immigration, some of the biggest tech companies went quiet. Their executives did not sign legal briefs, brandish statements or dissent on Twitter. They strove for business as usual.

This was the older, stodgier, less glamorous part of the tech universe. These executives are generally not household names. Most of the companies have little presence in the excitable consumer marketplace. Some are government contractors. Their workers tend to be more settled, less tempted by cool start-ups. Despite the companies' sizable employment, the spotlight is not on them.

Among these firms are IBM, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Qualcomm, Cisco, Dell and Oracle. When 127 companies signed an amicus brief last week in a Seattle court that said the executive order "violates the immigration laws and the Constitution," none of these six firms were on the list.

Yet even at some of these companies, there are stirrings of defiance. In a few well-publicized cases, workers have noisily quit. Many more have chosen to remain but are agitating for an explicit corporate morality even as Mr. Trump considers a new executive order on immigration. They want their companies to make clear not only what they support but also, perhaps even more important, what lines they will not cross.

The activist push is being driven in significant measure by women, who are still fighting for their due in a male-dominated industry. But in an unlikely twist, the chief executives they are trying to influence at two major companies are female.

At IBM, a petition has been circulating that proclaims, "We have a moral and business imperative to uphold the pillars of a free society by declining any projects which undermine liberty." The organizers say nearly 1,000 verified employees have signed.

This is a delicate subject for big tech companies, none more than Big Blue. Mr. Trump during the campaign explored the idea of a Muslim database, although his remarks were inconclusive. IBM's punch-card technology, as detailed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, was used by the Nazis in 1939 to do a census. That data, in turn, led directly to Adolf Eichmann's Jewish Registry.

At Oracle, the Silicon Valley database giant whose first customer was the Central Intelligence Agency, three young women — none of whom has worked there for more than a handful of months — started a petition last week to encourage the company to join the amicus brief. Hundreds of Oracle employees have signed it.

"In some instances it is notable for a company to take a stand on an issue," said one of the women, Irene Scher, a regional vice president of sales. "In this case, it's notable not to have taken a stand."

A co-chief executive of Oracle, Safra Catz, and the chief executive of IBM, Virginia Rometty, became advisers to Mr. Trump during the transition. "I know that you are committed to help America's economy grow in ways that are

FOIA CBP 000787

good for all its people," Ms. Rometty wrote to him in November. Ms. Catz said in December, "We are with him and will help in any way we can."

The three friends who created the Oracle petition joined the company in August, when it acquired the company they worked for, Opower. They emphasize they are not at odds with their employer.

"This isn't a criticism of Oracle," said one of them, Rachel Kane, a sales executive at Oracle Utilities. "We're giving them visibility into how individuals at the company feel." Oracle declined to comment.

Both petitions echo the Never Again pledge, which nearly 3,000 tech workers publicly committed to during eight days in December. Signers agreed not to participate in the creation of any government database that would target individuals based on race, religion or national origin. Five of the nine people listed on NeverAgain.tech as having worked to create the pledge, including the lead organizer, are women.

Cauvery Patel, a corporate strategy associate at IBM, said she believed "workplaces have a responsibility to society — to the clients we serve, the employees we hire and the citizens who are impacted by our decisions." She said IBM had been "progressive" in encouraging women's participation in technology and on other issues, but had not delivered on the immigration ban.

"IBM's decision not to actively stand up to the Trump administration and condemn this policy is extremely disturbing," she said.

At Hewlett Packard Enterprise, employees have been asking why it did not sign the amicus brief. Meg Whitman, the chief executive, responded Friday that "simply, we were not contacted to participate." She indicated the company would be taking a more assertive role: "You can expect to see us add our voice."

Dell and Cisco declined to comment. Qualcomm did not respond to a request for comment.

The internal debate at some of the big tech companies revolves around the question of engagement: Can you persuade more from the inside than the outside?

The pro-engagement position has been expressed by Elon Musk, the chief executive of Tesla and SpaceX and a member of the President's Strategic and Policy Forum. In a handful of cases, people have said they are canceling new Teslas because they view him as working for the president.

"Activists should be pushing for more moderates to advise President, not fewer," Mr. Musk responded on Twitter. "How could having only extremists advise him possibly be good?"

Mr. Musk said he had made sure that the travel ban was discussed "first and foremost" at a Feb. 3 White House meeting. A spokeswoman said no further details were available.

The answer did not satisfy everyone. As one critic replied to Mr. Musk on Twitter: "You are not advising Trump, you are giving him cover and validating his nonsense. You can do more good by taking a stand. Please."

IBM released a statement that said Ms. Rometty had "conveyed the company's views directly to the president and the secretary of Homeland Security" on Feb. 3, "including suggestions for how technology can help to promote both national security and lawful immigration."

Ed Barbini, vice president for corporate communications at IBM, said no further details were available. He noted that the company said in December that it would never participate in the building of a Muslim registry. He declined to comment on the petition.

When a small group of IBM employees was drawing up the petition in November, it debated including a reference to the Nazis. IBM maintains that the accounts of its role in Hitler's regime are overblown and incendiary.

The employees decided to refer to the episode obliquely but focus on a more positive example — the company president Thomas J. Watson Jr.'s Policy Letter No. 4, which resisted pro-segregation policies in the South in the 1950s.

"Watson sacrificed short-term business interests in order to be on the right side of history, something IBM takes pride in today," the petition says.

Daniel Hanley, one of the organizers, said the goal was "to build an organization inside the company that can hold IBM accountable to our values, and serve as a model for tech workers at other companies."

George A. Polisner, who worked in cloud services at Oracle, took his stand in December. He posted a resignation letter on LinkedIn, saying that unlike Ms. Catz, he was not there to "help" Mr. Trump.

"When his policies border on the unconstitutional, the criminal and the morally unjust," he wrote, "I am here to oppose him in every possible and legal way."

That was on a Monday. Mr. Polisner told his boss that he would work through Friday. After the letter became public, Mr. Polisner was fired immediately. At 56, he said, he probably would have worked at Oracle for a few more years if politics had not intervened.

"There are different ways to influence," Mr. Polisner said. "It's a personal decision. I chose this one."

Ms. Scher at Oracle and her friends chose another.

"We all participated in the Women's March," she said. "I think it's possible we're feeling a heightened sense of civic responsibility."

Hospitals Weigh Difficult Choice Amid Travel-Ban Uncertainty

FOIA CBP 000788

As residency decisions loom, officials consider risks of choosing candidates who may be barred from the U.S.

By Melanie Evans

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

An Interrupted Journey Ends In A New Life In The U.S. For Syrian Refugee Family

By Laura King, Contact Reporter

Los Angeles Times, February 12, 2017

Dense desert fog enveloped Queen Alia International Airport outside Amman, Jordan. Zohri A., a Syrian mechanic who was about to fly to the United States with his wife and four children for refugee resettlement, waited nervously to learn whether their flight to Chicago would take off as scheduled.

Soon enough, word came down: The flight was canceled due to the bad weather. Zohri and his family took the news calmly, even though they had already sold their scant possessions, vacated their small apartment and dressed in their best for the momentous voyage. They'd be booked on another flight in coming days, they were assured.

Local representatives of the United Nations' International Organization for Migration, which deals with logistics for departing refugees, quickly arranged for hotel accommodations for the family near the Amman airport. The children, especially the littlest, 5-year-old Amr, were drooping with fatigue. Zohri and his wife, Samar, went online to let friends and family know they wouldn't be starting their new lives in the United States just yet.

It was a setback, but not a grave one. They'd survived war's bloody ruination of their Syrian hometown, Homs, endured years of hardscrabble life in Jordan and undergone an exhaustive U.S. vetting process that had lasted more than two years. They were confident they would overcome this last small obstacle.

On the other side of the globe, at the Silver Spring, Md., office of the International Rescue Committee, news of the flight's weather cancellation was updated in a multiagency database that keeps track of refugee arrivals. The family, destined for settlement in a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C., would not be arriving that evening after all.

Such routine delays were disappointing, but didn't unduly alarm the office's deputy director, Preethi Nampoothiri, a veteran of hot-zone humanitarian work in Africa and the Middle East. Last-minute glitches happened for a variety of reasons. In any event, traffic that day would be tricky in and around the nation's capital anyway.

After all, it was Inauguration Day: Jan. 20, 2017. Donald J. Trump was being sworn in as the American president.

::

One week later, seated at an ornate table and flanked by aides, Trump applied his signature to an executive order, one of his first as president.

Under the order, the U.S. refugee resettlement program was suspended for 120 days, and Syrian refugees were to be excluded indefinitely. Travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries, including Syria, were banned from entry for three months. Tens of thousands of visas were invalidated; within hours, airports across the U.S. and around the world would be thrown into chaos, with hundreds of passengers denied boarding or detained on arrival.

Nampoothiri immediately recognized the implications for her organization's work — and for families like these soon-expected Syrians. "Devastating," she recalled. "A real feeling of sadness."

The signing was at 4:42 p.m. in Washington, nearly midnight in Jordan, but among the Syrian refugee community, the news raced across messaging apps and social-media platforms. Zohri learned of it by scrolling through his Facebook feed, and he and Samar spent an anxious night.

In the morning, their worst fears were confirmed. They would not be allowed to board their scheduled flight.

"We were speechless," Samar said later. "We thought, 'This dream is over.'"

::

War came early to the western Syrian city of Homs, the cradle of the uprising against President Bashar Assad that began in 2011. Rebels had established a stronghold in the city, about 100 miles north of Damascus. And the army arrived to root them out, whatever the cost to civilians.

By March 2012, the situation was dire. Then-U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the General Assembly that month that he had received "grisly" reports of arbitrary killings and torture by government forces in the city.

Before the war, the city was a thriving industrial center with a population of more than 650,000. Zohri worked in specialty truck repair, a good job with management responsibilities and a solid middle-class income. Samar cared for their children. The two oldest were then in elementary school and doing well in classes, especially Noor, who loved to read.

"We had a beautiful home," Samar said, remembering. "A beautiful life," Zohri chimed in.

::

Escaping the fighting in Homs, Zohri's family had first sought shelter outside Damascus, then made their way to Lebanon.

In 2013, they enlisted a smuggler's help to get to Jordan, and settled in the dusty village of Mutah. A friend of Zohri's from home, Husni, helped him find work in a clothing shop, but because he could not work legally, he accepted pay that was barely enough to live on. Samar worked also, at a

bus company — also for almost no money. The children could not enroll permanently in school. Their apartment was small and its surroundings squalid; they dared not complain.

"We could see there was no future for us in that place," said Samar.

Early in their stay in Jordan, they registered as refugees with the U.N. Eventually, after a series of interviews, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, referred them for resettlement in the United States. That inaugurated a two-year round of U.S.-mandated vetting: biometric checks, extensive background inquiries, repeated rounds of questioning about Zohri's political leanings and the family's reasons for fleeing Syria.

When their departure hopes were dashed by the executive order, Samar and Zohri and the children left Amman and traveled back to Mutah, finding themselves back in the same shabby little apartment they thought they had left behind forever.

They bought back some of the furniture they had sold days earlier for so little, paying a premium price. The smaller children, sensing their parents' distress, were quiet.

Noor, the eldest, about to turn 14, was the only one who cried. "How will I go to school now?" she asked. "How will I get an education?"

At some point in their stay in Mutah, someone had sent Zohri a photo of the family house in Homs, now a pile of rubble. He didn't want to look at it. It wasn't home any more.

::

In the United States, legal challenges to the travel ban mounted daily across the country. One landed in the Seattle courtroom of U.S. District Judge James Robart. On Feb. 3, a Friday, he placed a nationwide stay on the executive order.

Two days later, Zohri and Samar received a call with the electrifying news: Get ready. You leave tomorrow.

Hastily repacking, the family rushed back to Amman for Monday's late-morning flight to Chicago, crowded with a big contingent of Syrians with similar hopes.

When the plane touched down at O'Hare International Airport, applause broke out in the cabin. Entry formalities went smoothly. While the family waited to change planes for their flight to Washington, a woman came up to Samar and hugged her. As someone from a modest society, the Syrian woman was startled by such a seemingly forward gesture from a stranger — but recounting it later, her delicate features bloomed.

"I began to realize we were home," she said.

::

In Silver Spring, the IRC office got word of the family's impending arrival the same day that Zohri and Samar had. They had a little over 24 hours to get ready.

Logistics specialist Corey Rheingrover put in a call to the manager of an apartment complex in Landover, Md., where at least half a dozen other Syrian families had been placed. After all the stop-and-go of the past two weeks, was there an apartment suitable for a family of six? It turned out there was, but it was completely empty, with no furniture or household essentials.

Rheingrover put in his next call to a charity called Mozaic, based in Sterling, Va. On the other end of the phone was a 47-year-old dynamo named Raghad Bushnaq, who had emigrated from Syria in 1989.

She swiftly lined up donated furnishings, renting U-Haul trailers and dashing to three separate locations to assemble what was needed — beds, a dining set with chairs, a sofa.

Husni, the family's old friend from Homs and Mutah, who had managed to leave six months earlier, lived in the same complex. He quickly rounded up neighbors to help assemble furniture and unpack pantry items, toiletries, bedding.

At one point, some 18 people were bustling around the apartment, making beds, folding towels, putting groceries in cabinets, toothpaste in the bathroom. The aromas of traditional offerings like mahshi, an eggplant dish, brought by Syrian neighbors wafted through the air.

"It was really something magical," Bushnaq said of the communal effort. It brought back memories of her own arrival in the United States, when she knew no one except her husband, she said.

"It was a joyous time for me, coming here as a bride," said Bushnaq. "But these people, they are coming because they have lost everything."

::

It was a minute after midnight when the family emerged from the connecting corridor at Reagan Washington National Airport. Despite the hour, about two dozen well-wishers had gathered, waving welcoming signs. "Ahlan" ("Welcome") read one in Arabic script emblazoned with glitter.

Husni rushed forward to embrace Zohri. Someone handed Samar a bouquet. Little Amr half-hid behind his 13-year-old brother, Mohammad. Ten-year-old Aya, with pink clasps holding her high braids in place, blinked in surprise when she was given a box of chocolates, then smiled shyly.

Nampoothiri watched for a few moments before she stepped forward to gently usher the family toward baggage claim. "This is the best part of the job," she said quietly.

::

Three days later, the family had begun to settle in at their Landover apartment. Like many refugees, they did not want their full names used, still fearing for the safety of relatives back in Syria, but they offered tea to visitors and insisted, just as they would at home, that it be accepted.

They'd seen the Washington Monument from the plane, they said. Zohri had awakened the kids on the drive in to point out the apartment complex's swimming pool.

Much work lay ahead. They would need Social Security numbers, health-insurance enrollment. Husni was going to

FOIA CBP 000790

teach them the bus routes. Tests for placement in an English program. A cultural-orientation class was starting next week at the resettlement agency.

The children were already on a school-registration list and needed to get their vaccinations. Mohammad, smoothing a pompadour, wondered if he could sign up for the track team and compete in the shot put, his favorite event.

Khalid Balajem, a caseworker who brought them home the first night, described the family gawking at the apartment's furnishings, which included a car-shaped bed for Amr. The children asked him again and again: Is this really all for us?

Arrivals of other refugees would continue, for now. But with the Trump administration planning to cap all refugee arrivals at 50,000 this fiscal year, only about 16,000 more will be allowed in through October.

The UNHCR in Jordan has already turned its attention to other countries for resettlements, countries where there's more of a chance of success.

Zohri's family counted themselves among the lucky ones.

An Immigration Policy Worth Ending

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

PRESIDENT TRUMP says he wants to tighten those aspects of our nation's immigration laws that reward low-priority entrants or pose threats to national security. He also insists that his critics have no reason to worry that his family's far-flung business interests will have an impact on his administration's policies. Well, a bipartisan pair of senators has just given him a golden opportunity to prove his bona fides on both points.

We refer to a freshly introduced bill co-sponsored by Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Dianne Feinstein (Calif.), the committee's ranking Democrat. Their proposal would abolish the EB-5 visa program, which began a quarter-century ago as a well-intentioned plan to attract international capital to the United States, but has morphed into a scandal-ridden embarrassment. The program awards permanent residency to a maximum of 10,000 foreigners per year who agree to pump at least $500,000 into a U.S. business, creating at least 10 jobs directly or indirectly. In September 2015, the Bipartisan Policy Center estimated that 44,000 people, a third of whom are foreign investors and the rest family members, had qualified for visas since the program began in 1992. A disproportionate number of those admitted recently come from communist China, whose nontransparent economy makes the origins of their wealth difficult to trace. A 2015 Government Accountability Office report found that the Department of Homeland Security lacked the capacity to vet EB-5 applicants from China and elsewhere adequately, let alone in the "extreme" manner now in vogue at the White House.

In return, the Bipartisan Policy Center report found, the U.S. economy got 77,150 full-time jobs and approximately $4.2 billion in investment — paltry results, given that the United States has a total labor force of 150 million and $200 billion in annual foreign investment. To be sure, EB-5 has created a lot of jobs for consultants, lawyers and lobbyists, who get paid to entice wealthy foreigners into applying for the visas, and to persuade Congress to renew it each year. Alas, some EB-5 promoters have bent or broken the rules, as shown by a string of scandals, including the April 2016 federal seizure of an EB-5-funded project in Vermont that government lawyers called "rampant with fraud."

Even when the program functions honestly, its benefits skew heavily to big-city real estate developers, who use it to obtain financing more cheaply than they could from investors who were motivated by rate of return, not migration. Among the business owners to take advantage of EB-5 was Mr. Trump's son-in-law and adviser, Jared Kushner, whose erstwhile company (he has now separated himself from it) raised $50 million for a Trump-branded apartment building in Jersey City from Chinese EB-5 applicants.

Getting strongly behind the Grassley-Feinstein bill would be a good way for Mr. Trump to show that his immigration policies reflect consistent principles, not his and his family's involvement in the real estate business. The president has said he wants to be sure all new Americans come because they "love" the country. There are many ways to show that love, no doubt; but surely one of the least worthy of governmental favor is subsidizing hotels and apartments with one's murkily obtained wealth.

72 Convicted In U.S. Terror Cases Came From Nations Targeted For Vetting

By Stephen Dinan

Washington Times, February 12, 2017

At least 72 convicted terrorists came from the seven countries President Trump targeted in his extreme vetting executive order, according to a new report this weekend that directly undercut part of the courts' rulings halting the program.

Seventeen of those entered the U.S. under the refugee program that Mr. Trump has said is of special concern to him, according to the data compiled by the Senate Judiciary Committee and analyzed by the Center for Immigration Studies.

The convictions came in terrorism-related investigations since the Sept. 11 attacks, but some were for relatively minor crimes such as identity fraud. Nevertheless, more than 30 of the convicts served at least three years in prison because of their terrorism-related crimes, the CIS report said.

Judge James L. Robart, who first blocked Mr. Trump's executive order on Feb. 3, insisted in court that there were no such terrorists at all.

"How many arrests have there been of foreign nationals for those seven countries since 9/11?" the judge demanded of the Justice Department lawyer.

When she said she was unaware, Judge Robart went on: "Let me tell you. The answer to that is none, as best I can tell. So, I mean, you're here arguing on behalf of someone that says 'We have to protect the United States from these individuals coming from these countries,' and there's no support for that."

Later, a three-judge panel of a federal appeals court doubled down on that claim, saying that the government "has pointed to no evidence that any alien from any of the countries named in the order has perpetrated a terrorist attack in the United States."

Critics of the rulings said both the judges and the Justice Department were to blame — the judges for getting it wrong and the government's lawyers for not having the facts at hand.

Jessica Vaughan, the author of the CIS report, said the judges could have found the information "if they or their clerks had looked for it." She said the judges easily could have remembered the Ohio State attack in November 2016, when a Somalian who arrived as a refugee in 2007 used his car and a knife to injure 13 people before he was killed by a police officer.

Rep. Lou Barletta, Pennsylvania Republican, said the appeals court judges got it backwards. They said they were able to go beyond the president's executive order to look at his campaign rhetoric calling for a "Muslim ban," but didn't think to research the terrorist connections from the countries in question.

"Since the court decided that it has the authority to look at the reasons behind a presidential executive order, the least the judges could do is perform a simple Google search," he said.

Others said the Justice Department shared blame for not having its lawyers ready to handle that question — particularly by the appeals court hearing, after the lower court had already botched it.

Hans Bader, a lawyer in Washington, D.C., even alerted the Justice Department to the research before the appeals court oral argument, then again after oral argument but before the court's Thursday ruling.

The Justice Department declined to comment on its lawyers' performance or the criticism that's been leveled.

The department's first brief in the case was thorough, outside lawyers said. It was signed by Noel Francisco, the acting solicitor general, who is one of conservatives' star lawyers in Washington. He argued the successful Supreme Court challenge to President Obama's recess appointments, resulting in a unanimous spanking for the White House.

But Mr. Francisco recused himself from the next brief to the appeals court after his former law firm, Jones Day, filed an amicus brief on behalf of lawyers challenging the president.

The Justice Department said it was done "out of an abundance of caution," though other lawyers said that probably wasn't necessary.

That left the defense to August Flentje, a senior counsel at the Justice Department, who was excoriated after the oral argument last week. Analysts called his performance in the courtroom uninspired.

In the days since the ruling, refugees from some of the countries Mr. Trump singled out as needing special scrutiny have poured into the country at a faster rate. The Washington Times reported Friday that 77 percent of the refugees in the week since the courts reinstated the refugee program were from the seven special countries.

Mr. Trump highlighted that report in a Twitter post Saturday, then followed it up with updated numbers of his own Sunday showing that 72 percent of refugees were from the seven countries.

During the previous two weeks, the number was only about 30 percent from those seven countries.

Mr. Trump hinted late last week that he would issue a new executive order trying to meet some of the judges' objections.

The White House remained silent on the way its lawyers handled the case last week.

"We are going to win on the merits," said press secretary Sean Spicer.

Analysts said it's likely that as the case moves forward, the Justice Department won't make the same mistake again under newly installed Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Mr. Sessions was the chairman of the Senate's immigration subcommittee that compiled the numbers on terrorist connections.

• Dave Boyer contributed to this article.

Copyright © 2017 The Washington Times, LLC. Click here for reprint permission.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Homeland Security Head Is Pressed To Define 'sanctuary City'

By Elliot Spagat | Ap

Washington Post, February 11, 2017

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly told law enforcement officials on a tour of nation's border with Mexico

Friday that he couldn't define a sanctuary city, which President Donald Trump has targeted for withdrawal of federal funding for refusing to cooperate with immigration authorities.

Trump's executive order on immigration last month says a "sanctuary jurisdiction" defies federal law by shielding people in the country illegally and that they have caused "immeasurable harm to the American people and to the very fabric of our Republic." While sanctuary cities are broadly understood to mean a refusal to cooperate with the federal government on immigration enforcement, a precise definition has eluded many, including in law enforcement.

"I don't have a clue," Kelly told San Diego Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman when she asked for a definition.

The blunt-spoken, retired four-star general went on to say it was inconceivable why any jurisdiction wouldn't want criminals removed from their communities. "I'm stunned when people say, 'Well, we're not going to cooperate with you even in the event of convicted criminals," he said.

Kelly said it would be difficult to justify immigration enforcement grants to cities that refuse to cooperate.

"I promise you we'll work with you and will make no Draconian moves until I fully understand what a given locale might be doing or not doing," he told Zimmerman and other local police chiefs and sheriffs.

Kelly spoke near the end of a two-day tour of the border in Arizona and California. In San Diego, he joined agents on two house visits to deport people in the country illegally and toured a cross-border drug tunnel. Last week he toured the border in south Texas.

The secretary said he got "an earful" of suggestions from his employees on where to extend a border wall with Mexico, which currently covers about 700 miles of the 2,000-mile international divide.

"I'll take that on board, we'll bring it back to Washington, put in the blender and come up with a solution," he told federal, state and local law enforcement officials at San Diego's San Ysidro port of entry, the nation's busiest border crossing.

On Tuesday, Kelly told lawmakers that he would like to see wall construction "well underway" within two years, but he held open the possibility that it wouldn't extend to areas where there are natural physical barriers.

San Diego, which has one of the most fortified stretches of border, is often cited as an example of how walls can slow illegal crossings, but critics say fencing only forced people to more remote areas, particularly in Arizona, where many have died in extreme heat.

Kelly later told reporters that he worried about a federal appeals court's refusal to reinstate Trump's ban on travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries. He said vetting practices in those countries "are loose at best" and that the countries include failing or faltering states.

"I am concerned in that we are unable to vet these folks who are coming here in a more meaningful way," he said.

Asked about reports from advocacy groups that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents did a large roundup of people in the country illegally in Southern California and made arrests elsewhere, Kelly said authorities are executing the law. He didn't specifically address the reports but rejected the term 'roundup' and said officials cannot ignore federal laws. He said Congress should change the law if it sees fit.

At the meeting with law enforcement officials, San Diego County Sheriff Bill Gore sought help for legal authority to hold criminals in the country illegally after they finish their sentences, giving ICE authorities more time to pick them up at county jails. Kelly said he didn't know if that was possible but would do so if he could.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

America's Showdown Over Sanctuary Cities

The Week, February 11, 2017

The nation's biggest cities are preparing to lock horns with the Trump administration over undocumented immigrants. Here's everything you need to know:

What is a sanctuary city?

The term loosely applies to about 400 cities, counties, and states across the U.S. that limit local law enforcement cooperation with federal immigration officials. These jurisdictions range from sprawling metropolises like Los Angeles and Boston to smaller counties in rural Oregon and Kansas. These communities have varying policies: Most do not permit police to inquire about a person's immigration status, and some do not turn over undocumented immigrants to federal officials even if they're arrested. President Trump argues that sanctuary cities have become safe havens for criminals, and in January signed an executive order vowing to strip such jurisdictions of federal funding if they refuse to cooperate with federal immigration officials. That move has set up a legal showdown between the Trump administration and "every major city in the U.S.," says Rahm Emanuel, mayor of Chicago — one of at least three dozen sanctuary cities that have openly vowed to defy Trump. "This is not the battle they want to take on."

When did sanctuary cities appear?

The vast majority of sanctuary cities adopted their policies in protest of a Bush-era deportation program known as Secure Communities. That program automatically sent the fingerprints of people booked into local jails to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), allowing ICE to target and deport immigrants who had committed only minor crimes, such as traffic offenses. Some cities argued that their police were being turned into proxy immigration agents,

damaging community trust, and refused to cooperate. That resistance continued during the Obama administration, which sought to deport those charged with serious crimes. When Trump ran for president, he vowed to crack down on sanctuary cities, making the tragic case of Kate Steinle a centerpiece of his campaign.

What happened to Steinle?

The 32-year-old was shot dead by a stray bullet in July 2015 while walking along San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf. Steinle's suspected killer, Juan Francisco Lopez-Sanchez, was an illegal immigrant who had been convicted of seven felonies — most of them drug-related — and deported back to Mexico five times. He had re-entered the country and was being held by the San Francisco Sheriff's Department over a decades-old marijuana charge. ICE asked the sheriff's office to notify them when Lopez-Sanchez was released — but San Francisco, a sanctuary city, let Lopez-Sanchez walk free without providing that notice. Three months later, he fired the bullet that killed Steinle. Trump called the shooting "a senseless and totally preventable act of violence," and campaigned with a group of women he called "Angel Moms," whose relatives had been killed by undocumented immigrants.

What does Trump's order do?

The executive measure threatens to withhold all federal funds "except as mandated by law" from jurisdictions that fail to comply with federal immigration law. Republican lawmakers and other sanctuary city opponents argue that local jurisdictions don't get to pick and choose which federal laws they enforce, and that by rejecting more than 17,000 detention requests from ICE between January 2014 and September 2015, sanctuary cities were sheltering criminals. Trump's approach would "finally put federal executive action on the side of the victims and potential victims of crime," says Roy H. Beck, head of anti-immigration advocacy group NumbersUSA.

How have sanctuary cities responded?

They contend that Trump's order is unnecessary and counterproductive and have vowed to fight it. Most sanctuary cities already approve ICE detention requests if the immigrant has a history of serious or violent crime. Police groups also argue that sanctuary policies actually make a city safer, by allowing the country's 11 million undocumented immigrants to report crimes and work with police without the fear of deportation. "We're the melting pot of the world," says Capt. Jeff Scroggin, spokesman for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. "The most important thing we strive to do is to build enough trust so that residents provide information that makes this community safer." In 2015, sanctuary cities experienced 654 fewer crimes per 100,000 residents than non-sanctuary cities — a crime rate that's 15 percent lower.

What happens now?

Trump's executive order seeks to bring sanctuary cities to heel by stripping them of federal funding, which can make up 25 percent of a city's total budget. A major legal battle will now ensue. Cities will rely on two Supreme Court decisions: the 1997 Printz v. United States ruling, in which the late Justice Antonin Scalia wrote that the federal government is prohibited from "commandeering" state and local officials to enforce its laws, and a 2012 ruling that struck down an enforcement mechanism in ObamaCare's Medicaid expansion. "It's very easy to campaign that the king is going to wave his scepter and somehow take away federal funding," says David Narkewicz, mayor of Northampton, Massachusetts, a sanctuary city. "But this isn't the campaign anymore. This is a president who functions in a larger government — a government of laws."

The 'name-and-shame' list

Trump's executive measure on sanctuary cities includes another striking feature: It orders the Department of Homeland Security to publish a weekly "comprehensive list of criminal actions committed by aliens." Trump's name-and-shame list, as it's called by critics, would reveal the identities of illegal immigrants released back into their communities by sanctuary cities, and their specific crime. The goal is to pressure sanctuary jurisdictions to accept more detention requests. Opponents say the list would serve only to stigmatize undocumented immigrants, who are about half as likely to be incarcerated as native-born citizens, according to census data. But Hans von Spakovsky of the conservative Heritage Foundation contends that the rate of crime among immigrants is irrelevant. "The point is that every crime that is committed by someone who is here illegally is a crime that would not occur if they weren't in the country," von Spakovsky said. A public list of crimes, he said, would be "a very important piece of transparency."

Debate Heats Up As Sanctuary Movement Spreads

By Jennifer Fenn Lefferts And John Hilliard

Boston Globe, February 10, 2017

Since President Trump's election, more cities and towns west of Boston have entered the debate over whether to enact policies aimed at protecting undocumented immigrants.

Newton, Brookline, Arlington, and Acton are considering measures that would limit the role of police and other local officials in enforcing federal immigration laws, sparking passionate discussion on both sides of the issue.

Newton officials have proposed a "welcoming city" ordinance that they said would make the community safe and secure for all residents, regardless of immigration status. The measure was endorsed Wednesday by two City Council subcommittees.

FOIA CBP 000794

"We are not going to be in the business of picking up people for immigration violations, end of story," said City Councilor Emily Norton.

The move was greeted with applause from a packed City Council chambers, where supporters held signs with slogans like "Patriotism = Compassion" and "Protect our undocumented neighbors."

But not everyone was in favor of the measure — some opponents stood holding US flags and signs calling on officials to follow federal law.

"They're illegal immigrants. I don't think they deserve to be protected," said Norman Greenberg, who said he was concerned the city will lose out on federal funding.

"Civil disobedience is fine, so long as you're just saying you don't approve of something," said his wife, Judi. "But to set an example for our children [that] because we don't like the law, we're going to defy it, is a terrible role to set."

Trump recently issued an executive order authorizing federal officials to bar sanctuary cities from receiving federal funds, except when needed for law enforcement.

On Tuesday, selectmen reaffirmed Brookline as a "sanctuary city" and instructed the town's attorney to coordinate with other communities and develop legal strategies to combat "any punitive measures" from the federal government.

The selectmen also called for a review of Brookline police policies on working with federal immigration officials.

A group of Acton residents is pushing for the community to become a "sanctuary town" — a move its members hope will help allay the fears of undocumented immigrants worried about being arrested or deported.

"It's pretty obvious that given this administration, there are a number of communities that are in fear right now — Muslims, Jews, people who are gay, lesbian, or transgender, people with disabilities,'' said Danny Factor, a lawyer who is part of the group Let's Make Acton a Sanctuary Town. "We are concerned about people being scared in town.''

About 75 people attended the Acton selectmen's meeting Monday night, when the proposal was discussed. Dozens of people, many holding signs, spoke for and against, with comments taking up nearly three hours, said Selectwoman Katie Green.

'We are not going to be in the business of picking up people for immigration violations, end of story.'

Green, who supports the idea, said she offered to start working with the town attorney, the police, and the citizens' group to put together a draft resolution, but it's unclear when it will be taken up by residents.

"The board's general consensus was that there was likely not enough time to take this to annual Town Meeting in April but that we would take this next step and see where it leads us,'' said Green.

In Arlington, selectmen recently voted to place a resolution on the Town Meeting warrant that would make Arlington a "sanctuary town" or "Trust Act" community.

"What you can do is talk about what you stand for, and make the town a welcoming place," said vice chairman Daniel Dunn, calling it an issue of "right and wrong."

Steve Kropper, an Arlington resident and cochairman of the Massachusetts Coalition for Immigration Reform, said he is concerned about the president's immigration policies but does not think cities and towns should limit the powers of local police.

"Trump's messages on immigration are odious, [but] the sanctuary city movement is misguided,'' he said. "Most of us want to reclaim the thoughtful middle ground on immigration.''

Kropper said local police don't typically arrest or question people for suspected immigration violations, but the option can be a useful policing tool. He said local police play a big role in helping serve as eyes and ears for the federal government.

"Let law enforcement prioritize crimes, and if that includes using immigration statutes then it would seem like bad policy to have 351 Massachusetts cities and towns set immigration and police policy,'' he said.

Green said she asked for guidance from state Senator Jamie Eldridge, an Acton Democrat who has proposed state legislation to protect undocumented immigrants.

"Acton is a diverse community and I want to make it understood that we're a welcoming community and not discriminating against or negative toward people based on their race, ethnicity, or status,'' she said.

Eldridge has filed The Safe Communities Act, which would prohibit state collaboration with the federal government for the purposes of creating a Muslim registry, and ensure that state resources are not used for Trump's deportation plans. The bill is an expansion of the Trust Act, which was filed in the previous two legislative sessions.

Meanwhile, a group of Waltham residents opposed to Trump's executive order to close US borders to people from seven mostly Muslim countries has called on local officials to take a closer look at how the city can protect immigrants.

"For nearly 200 years, we have opened our doors to refugees and immigrants," the group stated in an online petition that has garnered more than 600 signatures. "Beginning with young Irish women fleeing the famine and African-Americans fleeing slavery in the South, generation after generation of people have found a home, a job, and a life in this city. In turn, Waltham has reaped the rewards."

In response, Mayor Jeannette McCarthy issued a statement saying the Waltham Police Department "does not pursue immigration status unless a serious crime has been committed, upon which they contact the federal immigration authorities."

McCarthy said that residents should contact federal lawmakers to enact legislation "to legally process the individuals living in this country and those who wish to come" to the United States.

"That is their job, and they should do it!" McCarthy wrote in the statement.

California Could Become A Sanctuary State. What That Means

By Gustavo Solis

USA Today, February 11, 2017

California cannot stop federal immigration officers from conducting deportation raids in the Golden State.

However, the state can stop local cops and deputies from helping the feds enforce immigration law.

California's "sanctuary state bill," officially known as Senate Bill 54, aims to severely restrict how much local law enforcement can work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. But the bill would not completely eradicate cooperation between local and federal law enforcement.

Riverside County Sheriff Stan Sniff described the dynamic like this: "If a checkpoint is conducted somewhere, we don't invite them. But the reality is they can drop by any time they want."

The Desert Sun spoke with lawyers, academics, activists and law enforcement experts to find out what SB 54 is and isn't. It is important to note that the current draft of the bill could be different from the one that becomes law, assuming it becomes law at all.

The current version of the bill would kick ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection out of local jails and restrict their access to some state databases. It also would ban state agencies from asking and collecting anyone's immigration status.

Police departments and sheriffs' offices still would work with ICE and Customs and Border Protection on multi-agency task forces, which sometimes result in deportations. Federal immigration authorities still would have access to fingerprint data from everyone booked into a local jail.

What does it mean to be a sanctuary?

Neither federal nor state laws have defined sanctuary cities, so the term means different things to different people.

"The biggest misconception is that people think that when you declare yourself a sanctuary it means that there is absolutely no contact with ICE, and that is not true," said Marissa Montes, co-director of the Loyola Immigrant Justice Clinic at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. "If ICE wanted to have a raid in downtown LA and did everything procedurally correct, like get a warrant, the city would not be able to stop them."

SB 54 was introduced before President Donald Trump's inauguration, but after a campaign in which he threatened to cut off federal money to cities that protect undocumented immigrants from deportation.

When Trump signed an executive order that strips money from sanctuary cities, he defined sanctuaries as local and state governments that have enacted laws limiting communication of their residents' immigration status with the Department of Homeland Security. These governments violate a federal statute.

SB 54 specifies that it is not violating the federal statute. Instead, the bill aims to limit what information local agencies can gather so that when ICE asks about immigration status, local agencies are allowed to communicate but won't have much to say.

However, Trump's order also gives his new attorney general, Jeff Sessions, authority to identify sanctuary cities. Sessions previously opposed immigration reform in the U.S. Senate and wants to limit legal and illegal immigration.

That discretion could be used against California to strip its federal money, but state officials would bring legal challenges.

"I think (restricting funding) is legally a gray area right now," said Ana Muniz, assistant criminology professor at University of California, Irvine. "The federal government can't compel local governments to act, but there is also the legality over the federal government forcing the state to act. Withholding money could be seen as an overstepping."

What would be the impact of becoming a sanctuary state?

Trump inherited a massive immigration enforcement apparatus that includes ICE, the border patrol and immigration courts. That enforcement machine is used in a variety of ways to deport immigrants in the country illegally and immigrants in the country legally but have committed crimes.

The president can prioritize going after immigrants convicted of crimes, like Barack Obama did, or cast a wider net and go after those arrested but not convicted of crimes, like Trump has done.

A private company called Management and Training Corp. runs the Imperial Regional Detention Facility in Calexico, Calif. (Photo: Gustavo Solis, The (Palm Springs, Calif.) Desert Sun)

In California, the majority of cooperation between local and federal agencies happens in county jails and is completely voluntary.

Many jails allow ICE agents to interview inmates suspected of being in the country illegally. Some jails also tell ICE when certain inmates will be released so federal agents can detain those inmates as soon as they are out on bail or are finished serving their sentence.

As now written, the sanctuary state bill would prohibit the use of state facilities for immigration enforcement

purposes. This would essentially kick ICE out of county-run jails.

"Saying we cannot provide access to individuals in our jails is problematic," said Cory Salzillo, legislative director for the California State Sheriffs' Association.

Salizillo said barring ICE from jails may result in a missed opportunity for the federal government to speak with and identify deportable immigrants while they are incarcerated. Inmates could be released after serving their time and commit more crimes in the U.S.

Additionally, Salzillo said the bill is vague on local participation in multi-agency task forces and may limit local participation on anti-gang or human trafficking operations.

State Sen. Jeff Stone, a Republican from Temecula, Calif., also opposes the bill because he is worried it may make it difficult for federal law enforcement to catch dangerous criminals.

Supporters of the bill call those concerns a fear tactic, saying the Department of Homeland Security would still have access for fingerprint data. They argue that people who have served their sentence already have paid their debt to society and shouldn't be punished a second time.

"We have a criminal justice system to respond to those concerns," said Grisel Ruiz, staff lawyer for the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. "We already have everyone going through that system. Why are we submitting immigrants to another?"

What are California's current immigration policies?

Two California laws, the Trust Act and the Truth Act, already limit specific aspects of type of in-jail cooperation.

The first law, passed in 2013, prevented jails from accepting detainers or immigration holds, asking them to hold inmates longer than their sentence so that federal agents could pick them up. Several aspects of detainers have been ruled unconstitutional in lower courts and the practice largely has been phased out in California, according to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center.

The second law, passed last year, addresses tactics ICE uses to interview inmates in jail.

Immigration cases are civil, not criminal; therefore, defendants don't have the same rights. For example, ICE agents aren't required to tell inmates that they have the right to remain silent even though inmates do have that right.

California's Truth Act requires inmates to receive consent forms explaining their rights to them before ICE agents talk to them.

Alameda County Takes Aim At Trump's Immigration Stance

East Bay (CA) Times, February 10, 2017

For the past several months, Eden United Church of Christ senior minister the Rev. Arlene Nehring has fielded her fair share of questions about discrimination and looming immigration enforcement concerns.

But a recurring question that still haunts her is one asked by Hayward area elementary school students since the Nov. 8 presidential election: Is it true that Donald Trump is going to deport all of our families?

"I've been asked that question since Easter," Nehring said at a Feb. 6 press conference in the Hayward office of Alameda County Supervisor Richard Valle.

"Some of our students are too afraid to come to school out of fear that they won't see their parents at the end of the day when they come home, while many other kids come to school but spend all day worrying about the safety of their extended family members and their parents," she said.

Nehring is one of the nearly two dozen elected leaders, nonprofit organizations, immigrant advocacy groups and religious leaders who backed an Alameda County measure that sets aside $750,000 to match a grant from the San Francisco Foundation to pay for defending and protecting immigrants and refugees in Alameda County.

That proposal, approved by county Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, dates back to December, when the board voted to create a committee on immigrant rights dedicated to "work on ways in which Alameda County can support its immigrant and refugee communities," according to a December supervisors memo.

The San Francisco Foundation offered the $750,000 grant later that month to "help support the creation and development of an Alameda County wide rapid response network to provide legal and support services to Alameda County families facing the immediate threat of separation due to detention and deportation," Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan wrote in a Dec. 14 memo to other supervisors.

The Partnership for Immigration Rights of Alameda County submitted a proposal around the same time to provide "legal services, rapid response coordination, community responders and know-your-rights education," the Dec. 14 memo reads.

The county's decision comes on the heels of several executive orders issued by Trump since his Jan. 20 inauguration, including a Department of Homeland Security directive to hire 5,000 more border patrol agents and set aside available resources to start constructing a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico.

"This order further contemplates a massive expansion in immigration detentions by detaining individuals on near suspicion of violating immigration law, detaining all individuals crossing the southern border and constructing additional detention facilities near the southern border," said Aidin Castillo, an immigration staff attorney at Centro Legal de la Raza in Oakland.

Another ordered the Department of Homeland Security to hire 10,000 more Immigration and Customs Enforcement

officers and revive a program that required local law enforcement agencies to share the information of detained individuals with the federal agency.

It also ordered that sanctuary cities, along with other jurisdictions that do not comply with federal immigration laws, not receive federal funds, except for law enforcement purposes.

A separate executive order two weeks ago suspended the refugee admittance program for 120 days; cut the annual number of refugees admitted into the United States from 110,000 to 50,000; indefinitely banned Syrian refugees from entering; and banned many green-card and visa holders from seven predominantly Muslim countries, including Iraq, Iran and Somalia, from entering for 90 days.

The county's $1.5 million initiative also dovetails with efforts by cities and community organizations to address Trump administration policies.

The San Leandro City Council, for instance, is scheduled to consider a sanctuary city resolution Feb. 21. If the resolution is approved, San Leandro would join several other East Bay communities that have embraced the sanctuary city designation, including Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley and Richmond.

The county's committee on immigrant rights also has invited police chiefs from Union City, Newark, Fremont and Hayward to attend its inaugural Mach 11 meeting in Union City and outline their stand on new federal immigration enforcement policies.

'Sanctuary City' Mayor Speaks After Nationwide Immigration Raids : NPR

NPR, February 12, 2017

Immigration officials recently conducted raids around the country. Lulu Garcia-Navarro speaks with the mayor of Austin, Steve Adler, about raids in Austin, which has been called a "sanctuary city."

LOURDES GARCIA-NAVARRO, HOST:

Over the past few days, federal immigration officials have conducted major raids around the country, arresting hundreds of undocumented immigrants. Officials say they targeted known criminals. However, immigration advocates say they have also detained some with no criminal records. Agents were sent into homes and workplaces in a number of American cities, including so-called sanctuary cities, like Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and Austin, Texas. These are places where local authorities don't automatically cooperate with federal immigration agents. The mayor of one of those cities, Steve Adler of Austin Texas, joins us now on the line.

Good morning.

MAYOR STEVE ADLER: Good morning, Lulu.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: First, can you tell us what's happening in your city right now?

ADLER: What we have right now is ICE, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, are making raids, picking people up. And they are, we understand, going after folks that are targeted. But they're also picking up people that are caught in that net that don't have the same kind of criminal backgrounds.

We have a community that is, quite frankly, scared. There's a lot of uncertainty here. It's, unfortunately, undermining a lot of the trust relationship that had been built up with our public safety officials over time. It's sending people back into the darkness. My assessment is, in a lot of ways, it's making us less safe.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: Mayor, I'm reading my Twitter feed. And President Trump has just tweeted this – the crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers and others are being removed.

What's your reaction to the president's statement? He feels that he is making the country more safe by removing these people.

ADLER: You know, I rely here on our public safety professionals – our police chief, our sheriff. And quite frankly, their views are consistent with the national – the big cities' police chiefs. What they say is that you have to develop a trust relationship with communities. In our community, we have one of the – in fact, Austin is one of the safest communities in the country. And we're safe because we have that relationship.

Victims in our community feel free to come forward and seek help from our public safety, regardless of who they are. Witnesses to events and to crimes feel safe coming to our police because they know they can do that safely. That's something that we've earned over time. And what our police and our professionals tell us is, is that if they're going to keep this community safe, they have to be able to preserve that relationship.

When they're asked to participate in voluntary programs – and again, you know, it's important to note that Austin, Texas, is not breaking any federal or state laws – when we're being asked to also act as federal immigration agents, it undermines that trust and that faith. And quite frankly, we don't have the resources to have our public safety people operating as federal immigration agents any more than federal tax agents or federal environmental agents.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: Sir, we should remind people, I think, at this point that these raids – these types of raids were carried out under the Obama administration as well. Is there anything different, in your view, about this?

ADLER: Well, my understanding is that in the Obama administration, they were targeting people that had warrants. They were criminals or – and that if during the Obama

administration, my understanding from talking to our consul general, is that when they would pick that person up, they wouldn't pick up the other three or four people that happened to be around them that were caught in that moment. What's happening now, I understand, is they're not only picking up the person who has the criminal background but somebody who does not. And that means that the raid is broader in this circumstance.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: Very briefly – President Trump has criticized sanctuary cities. Austin is considered one. Do you feel that your city was deliberately targeted?

ADLER: You know, I'm not real sure what a sanctuary city is in today's definitions. Under the president's order, it seems to be that a sanctuary city is a city that violates federal or state law, which we don't. And under that definition, I guess, we would not be a sanctuary city.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: Do you feel targeted, though, because of your positions?

ADLER: I think our community does feel targeted. And what we're understanding is that the activity in Austin may very well be greater and more intense than is happening in other places.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: Steve Adler, mayor of Austin, Texas, thanks so much for taking the time to speak with us today.

ADLER: Thank you, Lulu.

Arizona's Public Universities Will Not Consider Becoming 'Sanctuaries'

Arizona Daily Star, February 11, 2017

Universities across the country are declaring themselves as sanctuary campuses in light of tougher immigration policies from the White House — some, under pressure from students and local communities.

Arizona's three public universities, however, have no such plans to designate themselves sanctuary campuses.

"Sanctuary" in the political sense generally means a safe place, such as a church, where people can take refuge from immigration enforcement. While campuses, like churches, are considered to be sensitive zones, local and national experts say sanctuary campuses may not come with tangible protections for international, immigrant and undocumented students, experts say.

Arizona students asked for sanctuary designations of campuses at the Board of Regents' meeting last week in Tempe. While state university presidents have openly expressed support for international and immigrant students, the schools are not considering it.

An unofficial count puts the number of sanctuary campuses nationwide at around 30, including the University of Pennsylvania and Portland State University.

"We don't want to jeopardize our campuses in any way," said Eileen Klein, president of the Board of Regents. "Yet, at the same time, we've done a good job of making sure that our students know that we're actively working to make sure opportunities are there for them."

Many universities, like Arizona's, have shied away from labeling themselves for the fear that federal funding would dry up.

The Star tried to independently confirm each university's stance, but Northern Arizona and Arizona State universities did not respond. University of Arizona spokesman Chris Sigurdson referred to memos written by President Ann Weaver Hart and declined to comment further.

UA president opposes travel ban

In a recent memo to UA students and employees, Hart said she opposed executive order banning entry to citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries, which has now been overturned, and indefinitely suspending the refugee program. She has also expressed support for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals students.

Many of the policies that sanctuary campuses enact already exist at the UA, according to Hart. She said in a November memo: "Student privacy is assured by federal law, and it applies to all students regardless of residency status. That includes safeguarding their personal information, academic record, counseling services and any information the students want to withhold from the student directory."

She also said there is an Immigrant Student Resource Center, which is funded by student fees, that also helps DACA students and that UA's online programs are open to all students at the same price, regardless of state residency or immigration status.

But Irasema Fonseca, a UA junior who has interned for the resource center and spoke out in favor of sanctuary campus designations at the regents meeting, said she doesn't agree that enough is being done for the immigrant community on the UA campus. "These are words and not enough actions," she said.

Fonseca said students are scared and they cannot focus on their academics when they're afraid of themselves or their family members being deported.

For Fonseca, a sanctuary designation is a necessary move, especially for a diverse institution like the UA. "We're one of the most diverse universities in the nation. We're extremely close to the border with Mexico. There's a huge population of students from Mexico."

It's not just about undocumented students from Mexico or those who have deferred action status, she said. It's about the entire immigrant community at the UA, which includes international students and scholars.

Rapidly changing situation

Regent Ron Shoopman said in a meeting with the Star that the board will not act on any sanctuary designations

FOIA CBP 000799

based on speculations about what the Trump administration may do.

"We try to do things based on the facts of the situation," he said. "It would be speculation for me to even say whether I'd go this way or another until we can better understand it."

That was in response to questions regarding the possible termination of DACA, which President Trump said on the campaign trail he would repeal. So far, that hasn't happened, but what did happen is a less-publicized executive order that increases interior enforcement, which could affect Arizona students' lives.

Interior enforcement refers to immigration enforcement that happens inside the United States, away from borders and other ports of entry, including airports.

Nina Rabin, an immigration attorney and professor at the UA's law college, explained at a forum on the executive order that people who didn't used to be on the priority list for removal may now face deportation.

That group includes a long list of people: those who were charged with criminal offenses, whether the case was resolved or not, committed acts that constitute criminal offenses, deemed to be a threat to public safety, found to be abusing government benefit systems or suspected of misrepresenting their immigration status, she said.

It also includes those who live within 100 miles of the border, which includes the UA, but who cannot produce proof of having lived in the country for two years, she said. That would mean foreign and undocumented students should carry copies of necessary documents with them at all times, she said.

Sanctuary designation has no legal effect

Sanctuary is a "spectrum," says Stephen Yale-Loehr, an immigration attorney and professor at Cornell University, at a recent panel discussion in Philadelphia on sanctuary campuses.

Some colleges designate specific spaces where undocumented students can go to be protected, he said. Others have reaffirmed existing policies of not disclosing student information to federal immigration officials.

What's important to note, though, is that "sanctuaries don't have legal effect," he said. If immigration enforcement officials want to enter campus, they can get a warrant to do so. "But sanctuary resolutions help students feel more secure," he said.

Having a single point of contact to deal with immigration issues on campus, providing counseling and legal consultation to foreign, immigrant and undocumented students whose stay in the U.S. may be in jeopardy are some things universities can do within legal limits, he said.

The situation regarding immigration policies is changing by the minute, local and national immigration attorneys say. "We don't know what's going to come out next. It's just chaos," said Roxie Bacon, a Phoenix-based attorney who has worked in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Bacon advised students to suspend travel outside of the U.S., make copies of all immigration-related documents and safeguard them with friends, stay away from internal Border Patrol checkpoints and reach out for help.

"You're not as scared if you're prepared," she said.

Lansing City Attorney Warns Against Sanctuary Status

Detroit Free Press, February 11, 2017

If Lansing becomes a sanctuary city for undocumented immigrants, it may expose the municipality, City Council members and Police Department to "possible federal criminal sanctions," City Attorney Jim Smiertka wrote in a memo this week.

Smiertka shared his legal opinion on the proposed designation in a memo to City Council members and copied to Mayor Virg Bernero. The memo was dated Thursday and was posted on the city's website.

Council members could vote on a sanctuary city resolution at Monday's Committee of the Whole meeting. The meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on the 10th floor of City Hall. It will be open to the public. A final vote on the matter could take place at council's 7 p.m. general meeting that night.

Smiertka also wrote in the memo that a resolution directing Lansing police on how to carry out their duties falls outside of the power granted to council by the City Charter. He added that creating such a resolution directing police officers on how they should or shouldn't interact with the public could expose Lansing to liability under civil rights claims. The City Attorney also noted that it's uncertain what parameters may be used by the new Attorney General to designate sanctuary cities or the impact on federal funding, and it it will be some time before courts interpret the impact of President Donald Trump's executive order.

"Until the courts resolve the issues noted above, it is recommended here that a formal resolution or policy be delayed until more certainty in the law is achieved," the last sentence of Smiertka's eight-page memo read.

By noon Friday, a copy of a proposed sanctuary city resolution had not been made public. The Committee of the Whole agenda listed consideration of a "Welcoming/Safe Community" resolution, but offered no wording. Council members agreed at their Jan. 30 Committee of the Whole meeting that they would draft a sanctuary city resolution and review it at Monday's meeting.

If a sanctuary city resolution is passed by council, Bernero can veto it. The City Charter states that if a veto is filed, the resolution can't be overrode by council without at least a two-thirds vote of of support by its eight members within two weeks of the veto.

If Lansing becomes a sanctuary city, it could lose millions in federal and state funding.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order last month that allows the federal government to revoke funding from local governments that don't comply with immigration laws. There's also pending bill in the Michigan Legislature that would, if passed, withhold state funding from local governments that don't cooperate with federal immigration officials.

Lansing receives about $6.5 million in federal funding annually. The city's adopted $123.5 million general fund budget for the 2017 fiscal year included $14,275,900 in state revenue sharing. The 2018 fiscal year begins July 1.

Bernero told the Lansing State Journal last week a sanctuary city resolution shouldn't be passed because it's not needed. Lansing is already a "welcoming city" that has a history of settling refugees and immigration. The Lansing Police Department currently follows all federal immigration laws and will continue to not ask about the immigration status of civilians as they encounter or arrest them, Bernero said.

The proposed state bill, known as the Sanctuary Policy Prohibition Act, would call for state revenue to be withheld from local governments if they failed to report annually to the legislature the number of reports made to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office.

Bernero described the bill last week as "a half-baked attempt to federalize our local police department" and said he doubts Gov. Rick Snyder will sign it.

Activists from the Lansing chapter of the group BAMN – By Any Means Necessary – are expected to attend Monday's meeting to push for passage of a proposed sanctuary city resolution.

Seth Kalis, the chapter's organizer, told the LSJ this week the group will keep attending council meetings until officials pass a resolution.

"We're not going to give up," Kalis said.

In addition to Lansing's "welcoming city" status, East Lansing considers itself a "safe haven" for immigrants and refugees. The East Lansing City Council passed a resolution last week stating it refuses to cooperate with Trump's executive order suspending entry of immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries.

Analysis: Pro-Trump Arkansas Resists Anti-sanctuary Bill

By Andrew Demillo

Washington Times, February 11, 2017

Donald Trump easily won Arkansas' Republican primary and the state's six electoral votes last year after vowing to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and punish cities that don't cooperate with immigration authorities. A legislative panel's rejection of an effort to cut off funding to so-called sanctuary campuses shows resistance by lawmakers to fully embrace the president's immigration rhetoric, even in a solidly red state.

The House Education Committee's rejection of a bill to cut off funding to public colleges and universities that adopt sanctuary campus policies is a split from other Republican states. Neighboring Texas is advancing legislation banning sanctuary cities that would allow for criminal charges against city or county officials who intentionally don't comply.

It was a relief for advocates who say Arkansas has largely avoided enacting what they consider anti-immigrant measures, despite the state's shift to a majority Republican state over the past several years.

"To see this vote in such a resounding way, to keep Arkansas a state that has not ever passed an anti-immigrant piece of legislation we think is tremendously important and hopefully a good sign for what we hope to accomplish the rest of this session," said Mireya Reith, executive director of the Arkansas United Community Coalition, an advocacy and resource group for immigrants.

The lawmaker behind the sanctuary campus measure acknowledged no schools so far had adopted policies preventing their officials from cooperating with immigration authorities. Days earlier, Arkansas State University had rebuffed a petition urging the school to label itself a sanctuary campus.

"We need to help our administrators, our presidents of these colleges and universities as well as our chancellors, so they can actually push back and say we will not be encouraged to break federal laws," Republican Rep. Brandt Smith said before the vote.

The bill's failure comes as advocates are concerned about the future of a program created under former President Barack Obama that allows young people brought into the country illegally as children to stay and obtain work permits.

Trump said during the presidential campaign that he would eliminate it but has since said his administration "will work something out" and hasn't taken any action against the program during his first days in office.

The bill faced resistance from Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a former federal Homeland Security official who oversaw border security efforts. Shortly before the panel's vote, Hutchinson told reporters that he was worried about the impact Smith's bill would have on some students.

"They're paying tuition, out-of-state tuition I believe, and they are getting their education and while they are doing that we don't want to create a climate of fear for them," Hutchinson said.

Hutchinson, who has also expressed reservations about a separate effort to defund any sanctuary cities, joins a line of governors in the state who have grappled with legislative efforts targeting immigrants in the country illegally. Former Gov. Mike Huckabee blasted efforts to ban state

FOIA CBP 000801

services for immigrants in the country illegally. He also pushed unsuccessfully to grant college scholarships and in-state tuition rates to students who were in the country illegally.

Hutchinson's Democratic predecessor, former Gov. Mike Beebe, likewise criticized an unsuccessful attempt to cut off non-emergency services for immigrants without legal permission, a proposal he called "mean-spirited."

Hutchinson and the Legislature will likely face more tests on the issue. The lawmaker behind the anti-sanctuary cities bill said he wasn't deterred by the House panel's action. Immigrant groups are also concerned about a House-backed proposal requiring Arkansas courts to only use American laws.

In a state where Trump enjoyed major support in November, concerns about the practicality of these proposals could sink them as much as fears that they're anti-immigrant. Opponents of the courts proposal say it's addressing a problem that doesn't exist. It's similar to the criticism of the sanctuary campuses proposal, with lawmakers noting that they already have the authority to block funding during the regular budget process.

"Why should I pass a bill to grant myself a power I already have to fix a problem that does not exist?" Republican Rep. Jana Della Rosa asked.

Columbus Has Traits Of Sanctuary City, But Officially It's Not

Columbus (OH) Dispatch, February 10, 2017

Columbus doesn't call itself a sanctuary city, but it is acting like one.

City officials said last week that they would investigate whether Columbus should adopt the sanctuary label after President Donald Trump issued an executive order banning immigrants and refugees from certain countries from entering the United States. That order was overturned in court, and an appeal by the government was denied by another court Thursday.

Trump's orders have threatened federal funding for the so-called "sanctuary cities," but City Council President Zach Klein said Columbus is investigating what a sanctuary city is because the definition is unclear.

"I appreciate the brand and what's associated with the brand," Klein said. "But I also appreciate the substance."

Experts generally agree that there is no single legal definition of a sanctuary city, but those cities that have adopted the term do not cooperate with federal authorities to detain people based on their immigration status.

A similar policy was part of an executive order that Mayor Andrew J. Ginther signed last week.

Ginther's order prohibits the use of city resources for the "sole purpose of detecting or apprehending persons based on suspected immigration status, unless in response to a court order."

It also says that the city will oppose efforts to require using local taxpayer funds to enforce federal immigration policy and bars the city from denying access to services based on immigration status.

"What Columbus has been is a de facto sanctuary city," said Steve Salvi, founder of the Ohio Jobs & Justice PAC, which tracks sanctuary cities. "Columbus is not alone in trying to play both sides — be a sanctuary but have a wink-and-a-nod type policy."

The Trump administration, apparently, is leaving it up to the Homeland Security secretary to decide. In a Jan. 25 order that threatens federal funding for sanctuaries, the secretary is given authority to designate "sanctuary jurisdictions."

A White House spokesperson said sanctuary cities are those "standing in the way of immigration enforcement."

Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel and Rep. Candice Keller of Middletown, both Republicans, also have proposed a state ban on sanctuary cities.

A 2006 congressional research report found that 32 cities had sanctuary policies at that time. In 2015, the director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement testified before a House committee that more than 200 jurisdictions refuse to honor federal requests to detain people for immigration issues.

Klein and Columbus Councilwoman Elizabeth Brown hosted a roundtable discussion with more than a dozen nonprofit and immigrant groups this week to find out how Columbus policies affect immigrants and refugees in the city.

Brown said those groups told her a legal-defense fund she is assembling should focus on refugees trying to petition the U.S. government for family reunification and on reviews of legal status for immigrants already in the country.

Money for the fund hasn't been set yet, Brown said, but she is working with the groups from the roundtable to assemble a list of existing resources that are available for those facing legal battles.

Klein said he wants to have a public hearing about whether the city should adopt the sanctuary label before the end of March. Cincinnati recently labeled itself a sanctuary city, and White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said the city is risking federal money.

Columbus received about $125 million in federal funding in 2015. Its $40 million Smart Cities grant, awarded last year, came from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"The last thing I want to do is jeopardize $125 million in federal funding," Klein said. "That doesn't mean we back away from our policies."

Buyers Beware! Counterfeiters Trying To Cash In On Valentine's Day

CNBC, February 12, 2017

Americans are expected to spend $18.2 billion on Valentine's Day, according to the National Retail Federation. Unfortunately, some of that amount may be diverted by counterfeiters attempting to cash in on that with phony goods.

"Valentine's Day is coming up. So you'll see an uptick in counterfeit colognes, perfumes cause those are common gifts," said Jason Molina, an assistant special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigation's New York field office.

Counterfeit goods are estimated to bring in $600-$700 billion a year worldwide, according to Molina—and that figure is growing. In fiscal year 2016, the Department of Homeland Security counterfeit good seizures were up 9 percent over the comparable year-ago period.

Not only is that money diverted from legitimate business, it can also fund other illicit activities.

"Billions of dollars that are made from these items can go to fund terrorist organizations and go fund other criminal elements throughout the world," said Molina.

Agents and investigators from Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Department of Homeland Security are on the front lines of trying to stop the phony goods from entering the country.

It's the proverbial needle in the haystack, as eleven million shipping containers—each with as many as 2,000 boxes—enter the U.S. annually through various ports.

Recently, CNBC was on site when investigators examined a shipment entering a port in the Metropolitan New York-New Jersey. The entire shipment was believed to contain counterfeit perfumes, tucked away in just one of 3,000 containers that arrive at this hub daily.

With so many containers arriving each day, investigators say it's impossible to check each one. If CPB attempted to check every shipment, they say it could potentially grind economic activity to a halt. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics estimates that total North American freight activity is worth billions a year.

"We want to try to facilitate the legitimate cargo from coming into the country, and concentrate on the small percentage of volatile merchandise," said Al D'Onofrio, a CPB inspections chief.

Agents rely on what they call a risk based approach, checking the containers they think could be the most dangerous. One way to filter shipments is by manifests, which are filed before the containers arrive.

When the perfume shipment was opened, agents found bottles of Versace, Chanel, and Juicy Couture perfumes.

"The labeling is telling me it's from France, but yet it's coming from China, clear indication that this is going be counterfeit merchandise," said D'Onofrio.

Approximately 88 percent of counterfeit goods come in from China or Hong Kong, according to Homeland Security's Molina. Meanwhile, those phony scents may contain dangerous chemicals.

"You may be getting a $100 bottle of perfume for $20, but what's in that perfume? ... The counterfeiters have no standards," Molina said. "We've seen lead. We've seen arsenic. We've seen rat droppings."

The perfume shipment will be sent for further testing.

"We're going to verify our instinct and that this is counterfeit by sending it to our import specialist, and they're going make the final determination of the product. If it's determined to be counterfeit, we will seize it, and eventually it will be destroyed, if it's not part of any type of criminal investigation," said CPB's D'Onofrio.

If it was not stopped, agents suspect the perfumes would have been sold at small retailers and online.

How to make sure perfume isn't counterfeit

There are a few hints that a perfume may not be legitimate, officials said. If the price seems too cheap, that should be a red flag. Buying perfume from well know retailers and online sellers is the best way to ensure it's real.

"My main tip is to buy it from a legitimate source," D'Onofrio said.

When purchasing perfume from other places, take a look at the package. "Some of the packaging, some of the labeling, the pictures on there could be a flat appearance where it looks like it's faded out, and doesn't have sharpness to it," said D'Onofrio.

If you have the opportunity to open the package, you can check the quality and feel of the bottle.

"Putting it in your hand and feeling it, you know, you're dealing with something more of a toy than a high-end product," D'Onofrio explained.

However, the counterfeiters have gotten so sophisticated, it's often difficult to tell.

"It's very difficult for the average American person to go and look and say that they're not getting what they think they're getting," D'Onofrio said.

If you suspect someone is selling counterfeit goods, you can report it at IPRCenter.gov or by using the Homeland Security Investigations tip line, 1-866-DHS-2-ICE.

Sheriffs Still Looking For Clarity On Deportation

PBS NewsHour, February 12, 2017

Despite tough talk on sanctuary cities from the Trump administration, many sheriffs still fear that they lack the legal right to hold prisoners for possible deportation, even at the request of federal authorities.

Sheriffs, who operate 85 percent of local jails, are still waiting for courts to clarify the legality of "detainers," or federal requests to hold prisoners for possible deportation.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order Jan. 25 promising to punish any "sanctuary jurisdictions" that "attempt to shield aliens from removal from the United States." The order threatened cuts to federal funding and public shaming of "any jurisdiction that ignored or otherwise failed to honor any detainers."

But the new administration in Washington hasn't altered the legal landscape — at least not yet. Court rulings over the past several years have dissuaded even red-state sheriffs from honoring detainers, fearing that doing so would make them vulnerable to civil rights lawsuits.

"Sheriffs want to participate but we need to know our legal standing on this. We've been asking for this for years," said Sheriff Leon Wilmot of Yuma County, Arizona. Wilmot said he spoke to Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly about the issue Monday on behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association, which represents more than 3,000 sheriffs.

Wilmot said sheriffs need a definitive ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court. Sheriff Michael Bouchard of Oakland County, Michigan, said larger counties have the same concerns and want a court ruling, action by Congress, or an agreement that federal immigration agents will seek a judge's signature on detainers to make them more legally acceptable.

Last year, a U.S. District Court in Illinois ruled that the detainers are illegal because they exceed the government's authority to hold prisoners without a warrant. That followed a 2014 U.S. District Court order holding an Oregon county liable for damages after denying bail to a woman based on a detainer.

Liability Seen in Court Rulings

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), an agency of the Department of Homeland Security, generally issues a detainer request after receiving information about the arrest of an immigrant. The agency asks the local jail to hold the prisoner for up to 48 hours longer than it normally would to investigate the immigrant for possible deportation.

When considering whether to deport prisoners under Obama administration policies, ICE focused on those deemed to "pose a threat to public safety" because of gang activity or felony convictions unrelated to immigration status. Trump's executive order expands that focus to include any criminal activity, fraud or abuse of public benefits, or failure to obey a court order to leave the country.

Local authorities in 43 states refused to honor more than 16,000 detainer requests from ICE from October 2013 to December 2015. Only in Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Vermont and Wyoming did local officials honor all requests, and detainers are relatively rare in those states.

"We just don't feel we can legally hold people without something from a judge. This is a problem for sheriffs across the country," said Sheriff Tim Morse of Jackson County, Kansas.

But some sheriffs say they think they already have the legal authority to detain immigrants for federal authorities. Sheriff Richard Jones of Butler County, Ohio, said he disagrees with fellow sheriffs who won't honor detainers, though he is sympathetic to their position. The issue was hotly debated at the sheriffs' association's winter conference this month, Jones said.

"Every jurisdiction looks at it differently," said Jones, who views failing to honor detainers a violation of federal laws requiring cooperation with the federal government. "I feel we have the authority to detain."

Jessica Vaughan, director of policy studies for the Center for Immigration Studies, which wants to restrict immigration, agreed with Jones.

"There are a few [sheriffs] who have been sued who want a Supreme Court ruling." Vaughan said. "Most don't have any legal problem with it."

Jones said he supports a proposal in Ohio that would criminalize cities or counties that adopt sanctuary policies. It also would enable crime victims to sue local officials if an unauthorized immigrant is released despite a federal detainer request. Similar legislation has been proposed in Colorado and could be introduced by lawmakers in Alaska and Maine.

States Also Cracking Down

Other states are gearing up to create their own bans on "sanctuary" policies that could ensnare sheriffs trying to walk the line between liability and cooperation.

In Texas, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has vowed to withhold state funding from Travis County (Austin), which announced limited compliance with detainers. Texas lawmakers are considering a bill that would force local jails to cooperate with immigration authorities. A similar bill is pending in Iowa.

A bill in California takes the opposite tack. It would forbid local jails from holding prisoners for deportation.

Vaughan of the immigration center said a compromise may be possible if federal immigration authorities use an "administrative warrant" signed by supervisors because warrants signed by judges often are hard to get.

"There are no judges that would issue those routinely, and demanding them is another way of obstructing," Vaughan said.

Mark Fleming, an attorney with the National Immigrant Justice Center who represented plaintiffs in a lawsuit that struck down detainers in the Illinois court case, said he's not sure administrative warrants would satisfy the judge's ruling.

"I do feel for these sheriffs. They're like a ping pong ball caught in the middle of all this," Fleming said. The judge in the Illinois case struck down all detainers as illegal, but the decision has not taken effect yet. The court gave the new administration in Washington time to decide whether to appeal.

Fleming's lawsuit was brought on behalf of two people who were arrested and mistakenly detained at the federal government's request, although one is a U.S. citizen and the other holds a green card.

Generally speaking, the sheriffs' group supports Trump's immigration policies. Greg Champagne, the group's president, has applauded the president's executive orders on immigration, saying they'll help with the "burden associated with criminal illegal immigration and the subsequent impact on our communities."

Trump invited sheriffs to a "listening session" Tuesday at the White House, and heard nothing but praise from the group.

"You're about the rule of law. We haven't seen that in many years," said Sheriff Sam Page of Rockingham County, North Carolina. "You've got support from sheriffs around the country," Page said.

Police chiefs who operate jails have the same liability concerns, said Darrel Stephens, director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association. Many will not honor the detainers without a warrant signed by a judge.

"A good many jails and even states have said that they will not honor the detainer requests without a warrant," Stephens said. "This is not an unreasonable request and certainly doesn't mean they're unwilling to cooperate. They just want to ensure they are operating within the law," Stephens said.

Trump Order For Publishing Weekly List Of Immigrant Crimes Draws Praise And Outcry

Fox News, February 10, 2017

Some call it a witch-hunt. Others say it's a much-needed reality check.

President Trump, who during his campaign frequently spoke of illegal immigrants who had murdered Americans, has ordered the Department of Homeland Security to publish a public weekly list of criminal actions committed by people in the U.S. illegally.

Trump also instructed the agency to make public each week the localities that are not working with immigration officials by turning illegal immigrants in their custody over for deportation proceedings.

The order said it was intended "To better inform the public regarding the public safety threats associated with sanctuary jurisdictions."

Rep. Steve King, an Iowa Republican who has been one of Congress' most vocal and persistent proponents of strict immigration policies, lauded the new orders.

"We'll be able to build an updated spreadsheet of their [DHS'] activities, arrests and deportations," said King, who long has pushed for more public data on crimes committed by immigrants. "I'm delighted. This is sunshine on the government."

King says he hopes to see "a full picture on how many illegal aliens are encountered by law enforcement" and he would like to see it include misdemeanors as well as more serious crimes.

Advocates seeking more lenient immigration policies likened the order to a witch hunt. They said that Trump is demonizing all illegal immigrants by portraying them as criminals.

"Trump wants to lift up stories of crimes because he wants the American people to think that most undocumented immigrants are criminals," said Frank Sharry, executive director of America's Voice, a Washington D.C.-based organization that favors less restrictive immigration laws. "Every expert knows the opposite is true, but he wants to spread the 'Big Lie' to justify what he intends to do – which is to try to force millions of immigrants out of the country."

Those who favor strict immigration enforcement are lauding the order, saying that cracks in the system that have allowed immigrants to commit crimes, including murder, after they have been deported and returned must be underscored and fixed.

"These provisions of the executive order enhance transparency and public safety and are long-overdue," said Bob Dane, spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which is based in Washington. "Under the Obama Administration, data regarding illegal alien crime was either non-existent, withheld or conflated.

"Collecting and publishing accurate information on illegal alien crime is a necessary and rightful obligation of government," Dane said. "It allows us to get the full picture so that we can make meaningful policy in the public interest based on empirical evidence, not political spin."

What is unclear is whether names will be published along with the crimes committed, and whether the list will include only serious felonies or low-level crimes as well.

White House Director of Media Affairs Helen Aguirre Ferré referred those questions to the Department of Homeland Security.

Gillian M. Christensen, the acting press secretary for DHS, said in an email to FoxNews.com in response to such questions: "We're not getting into a lot of the specifics right now."

Trump made cracking down on illegal immigrants and beefing up border security a major part of his presidential campaign. He has proposed deporting 11 million illegal immigrants living in the U.S. and building a massive wall along the country's southern border with Mexico.

On the opening day of the Republican National Convention last summer, delegates who were gathered to cast their vote for the presidential nominee heard from family members of people killed by illegal immigrants.

"My son's life was taken by an illegal alien," said one of the speakers, Mary Mendoza, whose son Brandon, a police officer in Arizona, was killed by an illegal immigrant who was driving while intoxicated. "It's time we have an administration that cares more about Americans than illegals."

She added: "A vote for Hillary [Clinton] puts all of our lives at risk. It's time for Donald Trump."

Trump has held up crimes by illegal immigrants as an example of the dangers of a large population that lives in the shadows, and whose criminal histories are unknown. One of the most high-profile crimes by an undocumented immigrant in recent years was the murder in 2015 in San Francisco of Kathryn Steinle. Juan Francisco Lopez-Sanchez, an undocumented immigrant who was charged with her murder, illegally re-entered the United States several times after being deported.

Immigration attorney Marty Rosenbluth, who practices in North Carolina, said the Trump administration is casting a wide net when it speaks about criminals.

"The categories for criminal are so broad," Rosenbluth told Fox News. Rosenbluth added that information about immigrants who have committed crimes already is compiled.

"That data-sharing never ended," he said. The goal seems to be, he said, "to shame localities" and cast a pall over immigrants.

After Daring Voyage To U.S., Haitians' Dreams End In Deportation

By Makini Brice

Reuters, February 10, 2017

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

Brooklyn Congresswoman Moves To Shield Haitian Refugees From Deportation After Trump Order

MSN, February 11, 2017

Brooklyn Congresswoman Yvette Clarke—co-chairwoman of the House Caribbean Caucus—has put forward legislation to protect undocumented Haitians from deportation in the aftermath of President Donald Trump's executive orders aimed at expelling millions of immigrants.

The Haiti Emergency Relief Act of 2017 would significantly expand the Temporary Protected Status program—which shields refugees from being deported to dangerous homelands—to include all Haitian nationals who were in the United States before November 4, 2016. Clarke pointed to extreme weather events on the island nation as reason to grant 18 months of TPS to every eligible individual.

"Those needs have increased since Haiti suffered extensive damage during Hurricane Matthew last year, when hundreds of people were killed and thousands of families were displaced," Clarke said. "Congress must act."

After the 2010 earthquake, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services established Temporary Protected Status for Haitians living in the United States to enable Haiti to commence recovery and provide support in the form of remittances to family members there. But those who arrived later than 2011 found themselves ineligible.

Clarke noted that if Congress passes the legislation, Haitians would be able to continue remitting money back to their homeland—money that makes up roughly 25 percent of the country's gross domestic product—which Clarke argued is crucial to the continuing recovery process.

"I urge my colleagues in Congress to work together to aid the people of Haiti at this crucial time," Clarke,, herself the daughter of Jamaican immigrants, continued.

In just a couple of weeks, Trump has signed executive orders mandating the construction of a wall on the Mexican border and allowing federal authorities to expel undocumented immigrants even when they are simply charged with a criminal offense. He also inked orders that slash federal funding for sanctuary cities—cities that offer a haven for undocumented immigrants—and prohibit entry to people from seven Muslim-majority countries. A Seattle judge temporarily suspended the Muslim travel ban last week, and the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld that ruling last night.

In November, Clarke expressed dismay over the Department of Homeland Security's announcement that removal proceedings resumed for Haitians in the United States who do not have TPS. She said that most of the people that DHS sought to remove had not been accused of any crime and that the deportations would return thousands of Haitians to a country still plagued by the aftermath of natural disasters.

Clarke, part of the largely powerless Democratic House minority, recently convened an emergency meeting in Brooklyn's Little Pakistan neighborhood on Trump's travel ban. She co-sponsored Queens Congresswoman Grace Meng's "No Funds for Unconstitutional Executive Orders Act," which would ban Congress from allocating any funds to enforce the ban.

The West Coast's Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's temporary injunction against the fiat's implementation last night.

Private Prison Firm Sees Trump Immigration Push Opportunity

By Jonathan Mattise | Ap

Washington Post, February 10, 2017

The United States' largest private prison operator said it can provide the additional detention facilities that will likely be

needed under President Donald Trump's executive orders on immigration.

In an earnings call this week, CoreCivic President/CEO Damon Hininger identified the possible opportunity to grow its detention business with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

CoreCivic's statement further indicates that private prison firms think they could profit from a Trump presidency, who has already issued executive orders aimed at detaining and deporting immigrants who are in the country illegally.

Trump is offering a starkly different outlook for the industry than President Barack Obama, whose administration aimed to wind down some private prison use.

Additionally, a high population of immigrants detained in ICE-contracted facilities helped fuel CoreCivic's fourth-quarter financial gains, Hininger said. That was before Trump took office.

"When coupled with the above average rate of crossings along the Southwest border," Hininger said, "these executive orders appear likely to significantly increase the need for safe, humane and appropriate detention bed capacity."

Hininger said more detention capacity could be needed after two Trump executive orders last month. They include building a U.S.-Mexico border wall, adding detention and border patrol officers, and cutting grants for immigrant-protecting "sanctuary cities," all largely pending congressional funding.

Trump also moved to end a policy where some immigrants caught crossing the border illegally are released and given notices to report back to immigration officials at a later date.

Acting Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director Thomas Homan said recently that the government is looking for more jail beds.

Nashville-based CoreCivic, formerly named Corrections Corporation of America, saw its stock price plummet when the Obama administration announced in August that the Justice Department would wind down private prison use. A Justice Department audit at the time said there were more safety and security problems at privately run prison operations.

ICE contracts with private prison groups were unaffected by the policy shift.

The day after Trump's election, CoreCivic saw its shares on the New York Stock Exchange climb 43 percent. Shares of another private prison firm, Geo Group, also increased 21 percent.

The government has enough money to maintain 34,000 detention beds for immigrants awaiting deportation, although the number of detainees has topped 40,000 in recent months.

At last report in November, 46 of about 180 facilities in which ICE holds those immigrants are privately run, with about 73 percent of detainees held in the private facilities. The agency couldn't immediately be reached Friday for the latest figures.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Tunnel Found In Tijuana Near Border Along Otay Mesa

San Diego Union-Tribune, February 10, 2017

Tijuana police found a tunnel on the Mexican side of the border in the area of San Diego's Otay Mesa, a U.S. official said Friday.

"It did not cross into the U.S. — it was incomplete," said Lauren Mack, spokeswoman for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Tijuana police made the discovery and informed U.S. federal officials, Mack said. She said Mexican authorities are handling the investigation themselves.

"We're not working together" on it, she said.

Border Tunnel Discovered On Day Of DHS Sec Kelly's Visit

KNSD-TV San Diego, February 10, 2017

Mexican authorities uncovered a new drug tunnel in Tijuana on Friday, the same day the new U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary was visiting the U.S.-Mexico border.

The tunnel was discovered when Mexican state police stumbled on an armed man was found in a Tijuana parking lot, according to a written release from the Mexican government. The location of the tunnel opening is Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, officials said.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesperson Lauren Mack said the tunnel was incomplete and did not reach U.S. land. The nearest streets are Via de la Amistad and Siempre Viva Road.

DHS Secretary John Kelly was scheduled to tour one of the most fortified stretches of the border separating San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico.

Kelly was visiting the border in Arizona and California for the first time since he became secretary last month. Last week he toured the border in southern Texas.

NBC 7 spoke to Everard Meade, Director of the Transborder Institute at the University of San Diego, who said that the border wall in San Diego doesn't stop drug cartels and smugglers.

"We're talking just about this physical border because it's a good political symbol, but it's not really how most people and things get into the United States anyway," Meade said.

He added that the U.S. needs Mexico's cooperation when it comes to such occurrences.

"The old analogy is, you build a 20-foot wall, they build a 21-foot ladder," he said.

According to the DHS, an estimated 148 tunnels have been build along the U.S.-Mexico border since 2006, most of them in California and Arizona.

Penn State Calls Immigration Posters 'Deeply Offensive'

Philly (PA), February 12, 2017

Penn State says posters that someone has put up on university bulletin boards calling on people to report those in the country illegally are "deeply offensive," saying they "appear to be designed to provoke anger, fear and hate."

Officials said the posters began appearing on public bulletin boards on the main campus at State College. The university's student newspaper, The Daily Collegian, said images of the posters had been circulating on social media earlier in the week. An image published by the paper included the message, "It is your civic duty to report any and all illegal aliens. They have broken the law."

"The posters are unsigned and appear to be designed to provoke anger, fear and hate. The university finds them deeply offensive," Penn State said in a statement.

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials called the signs "bogus" on Friday, saying the agency wasn't involved and wouldn't solicit information in that manner.

Such posters found on bulletin boards designated for use only by university organizations were being removed, the university statement said. Posters on public boards would not be removed "but may be relocated if they are used to block other posted documents," the university said.

The posters came amid concern on campus over federal immigration policies of the Trump administration, including a temporary ban on immigration from seven Muslim-majority nations that has been blocked by the federal courts.

University president Eric Barron expressed opposition to the action in a Jan. 29 statement and urged international students, faculty and scholars to carry immigration documents proving their legal statuses "whenever you are traveling within the United States."

The university said in its statement about the posters that officials wanted to emphasize "that every student on this campus has earned the right to be here based on their academic qualifications and hard work.

"Penn State is enriched by students and scholars from around the world and we will continue our work on providing a climate of inclusion for all, regardless of country of origin," the university said.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

A US-born NASA Scientist Was Detained At The Border Until He Unlocked His Phone

The Verge, February 12, 2017

Two weeks ago, Sidd Bikkannavar flew back into the United States after spending a few weeks abroad in South America. An employee of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), Bikkannavar had been on a personal trip, pursuing his hobby of racing solar-powered cars. He had recently joined a Chilean team, and spent the last weeks of January at a race in Patagonia.

Bikkannavar is a seasoned international traveller — but his return home to the US this time around was anything but routine. Bikkannavar left for South America on January 15th, under the Obama Administration. He flew back from Santiago, Chile to the George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, Texas on Monday, January 30th, just over a week into the Trump Administration.

He was detained by Customs and pressured to give up his phone and access PIN

Bikkannavar says he was detained by US Customs and Border Patrol and pressured to give the CBP agents his phone and access PIN. Since the phone was issued by NASA, it may have contained sensitive material that wasn't supposed to be shared. Bikkannavar's phone was returned to him after it was searched by CBP, but he doesn't know exactly what information officials might have taken from the device.

The JPL scientist returned to the US four days after the signing of a sweeping and controversial Executive Order on travel into the country. The travel ban caused chaos at airports across the United States, as people with visas and green cards found themselves detained, or facing deportation. Within days of its signing, the travel order was stayed, but not before more than 60,000 visas were revoked, according to the US State Department. Photo by David McNew/Getty Images

His ordeal also took place at a time of renewed focus on the question of how much access CBP can have to a traveler's digital information, whether or not they're US citizens: in January, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) filed complaints against CBP for demanding that Muslim American citizens give up their social media information when they return home from overseas. And there's evidence that that kind of treatment could become commonplace for foreign travelers. In a statement this week, Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly said that people visiting the United States may be asked to give up passwords to their social media accounts. "We want to get on their social media, with passwords: What do you do, what do you say?"

Kelly told the House Homeland Security Committee. "If they don't want to cooperate then you don't come in."

Seemingly, Bikkannavar's reentry into the country should not have raised any flags. Not only is he a natural-born US citizen, but he's also enrolled in Global Entry — a program through CBP that allows individuals who have undergone background checks to have expedited entry into the country. He hasn't visited the countries listed in the immigration ban and he has worked at JPL — a major center at a US federal agency — for 10 years. There, he works on "wavefront sensing and control," a type of optics technology that will be used on the upcoming James Webb Space Telescope.

Bikkanavar's reentry into the country should not have raised any flags

"I don't know what to think about this," Bikkannavar recently told The Verge in a phone call. "...I was caught a little off guard by the whole thing."

Bikkannavar says he arrived into Houston early Tuesday morning, and was detained by CBP after his passport was scanned. A CBP officer escorted Bikkannavar to a back room, and told him to wait for additional instructions. About five other travelers who had seemingly been affected by the ban were already in the room, asleep on cots that were provided for them.

About 40 minutes went by before an officer appeared and called Bikkannavar's name. "He takes me into an interview room and sort of explains that I'm entering the country and they need to search my possessions to make sure I'm not bringing in anything dangerous," he says. The CBP officer started asking questions about where Bikkannavar was coming from, where he lives, and his title at work. It's all information the officer should have had since Bikkannavar is enrolled in Global Entry. "I asked a question, 'Why was I chosen?' And he wouldn't tell me," he says.

The officer also presented Bikkannavar with a document titled "Inspection of Electronic Devices" and explained that CBP had authority to search his phone. Bikkannavar did not want to hand over the device, because it was given to him by JPL and is technically NASA property. He even showed the officer the JPL barcode on the back of phone. Nonetheless, CBP asked for the phone and the access PIN. "I was cautiously telling him I wasn't allowed to give it out, because I didn't want to seem like I was not cooperating," says Bikkannavar. "I told him I'm not really allowed to give the passcode; I have to protect access. But he insisted they had the authority to search it." NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory NASA

Courts have upheld customs agents' power to manually search devices at the border, but any searches made solely on the basis of race or national origin are still illegal. More importantly, travelers are not legally required to unlock their devices, although agents can detain them for significant periods of time if they do not. "In each incident that I've seen, the subjects have been shown a Blue Paper that says CBP has legal authority to search phones at the border, which gives them the impression that they're obligated to unlock the phone, which isn't true," Hassan Shibly, chief executive director of CAIR Florida, told The Verge. "They're not obligated to unlock the phone."

Nevertheless, Bikkannavar was not allowed to leave until he gave CBP his PIN. The officer insisted that CBP had the authority to search the phone. The document given to Bikkannavar listed a series of consequences for failure to offer information that would allow CBP to copy the contents of the device. "I didn't really want to explore all those consequences," he says. "It mentioned detention and seizure." Ultimately, he agreed to hand over the phone and PIN. The officer left with the device and didn't return for another 30 minutes.

NASA employees are obligated to protect work-related information, no matter how minuscule

Eventually, the phone was returned to Bikkannavar, though he's not sure what happened during the time it was in the officer's possession. When it was returned he immediately turned it off because he knew he had to take it straight to the IT department at JPL. Once he arrived in Los Angeles, he went to NASA and told his superiors what had happened. Bikkannavar can't comment on what may or may not have been on the phone, but he says the cybersecurity team at JPL was not happy about the breach. Bikkannavar had his phone on hand while he was traveling in case there was a problem at work that needed his attention, but NASA employees are obligated to protect work-related information, no matter how minuscule. We reached out to JPL for comment, but the center didn't comment on the event directly.

Bikkannavar noted that the entire interaction with CBP was incredibly professional and friendly, and the officers confirmed everything Bikkannavar had said through his Global Entry background checks. CBP did not respond to a request for comment.

He posted an update on Facebook about what happened, and the story has since been shared more than 2,000 times. A friend also tweeted about Bikkannavar's experience, which was also shared more than 7,000 times. Still, he's left wondering the point of the search, and he's upset that the search potentially compromised the privacy of his friends, family, and coworkers who were listed on his phone. He has since gotten a completely new device from work with a new phone number.

"Sometimes I get stopped and searched, but never anything like this."

"It was not that they were concerned with me bringing something dangerous in, because they didn't even touch the bags. They had no way of knowing I could have had something in there," he says. "You can say, 'Okay well maybe

it's about making sure I'm not a dangerous person,' but they have all the information to verify that."

Bikkannavar says he's still unsure why he was singled out for the electronic search. He says he understands that his name is foreign — its roots go back to southern India. But it shouldn't be a trigger for extra scrutiny, he says. "Sometimes I get stopped and searched, but never anything like this. Maybe you could say it was one huge coincidence that this thing happens right at the travel ban."

How To Get Past Customs Without Giving Up Your Digital Privacy

Wired, February 12, 2017

When Ryan Lackey travels to a country like Russia or China, he takes certain precautions: Instead of his usual gear, the Seattle-based security researcher and founder of a stealth security startup brings a locked-down Chromebook and an iPhone SE that's set up to sync with a separate, non-sensitive Apple account. He wipes both before every trip, and loads only the minimum data he'll need. Lackey goes so far as to keep separate travel sets for each country, so that he can forensically analyze the devices when he gets home to check for signs of each country's tampering.

Now, Lackey says, the countries that warrant that paranoid approach to travel might include not just Russia and China, but the United States, too—if not for Americans like him, than for anyone with a foreign passport who might come under the increasingly draconian and unpredictable scrutiny of the US Customs and Border Protection agency. "All of this applies to America more than it has in the past," says Lackey. "If I thought I were likely to be a targeted person, I would go through this same level of protection."

In the weeks since President Trump's executive order ratcheted up the vetting of travelers from majority Muslim countries, or even people with Muslim-sounding names, passengers have experienced what appears from limited data to be a "spike" in cases of their devices being seized by customs officials. American Civil Liberties Union attorney Nathan Wessler says the group has heard scattered reports of customs agents demanding passwords to those devices, and even social media accounts. And newly sworn-in Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly told Congress earlier this week that the agency is considering requiring foreign travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries to hand over their social media passwords or be refused entry.

"Requesting passwords is just beyond the pale," says Wessler. He points out that the practice doesn't just affect individual travelers, but everyone they've communicated with, potentially reducing the overall trust and security of social media in general. "If this were to go forward, it would risk really wreaking havoc with tourism and business travel to the US. What traveler is going to want to lay bare every intimate detail of their social media history, exposing years of their lives?"

In fact, US Customs and Border Protection has long considered US borders and airports a kind of loophole in the Constitution's Fourth Amendment protections, one that allows them wide latitude to detain travelers and search their devices. For years, they've used that opportunity to hold border-crossers on the slightest suspicion, and demand access to their computers and phones with little formal cause or oversight.

Even citizens are far from immune. CBP detainees from journalists to filmmakers to security researchers have all had their devices taken out of their hands by agents.

As those intrusions become more common and aggressive in the Trump era, WIRED has assembled the following advice from legal and security experts to preserve your digital privacy while crossing American borders. But take all of these strategies with caution: Given CBP's unpredictable and in many areas undocumented practices, none of the experts WIRED spoke to claimed to have a privacy panacea for the American border.

Lock Down Devices

If customs officials do take your devices, don't make their intrusion easy. Encrypt your hard drive with tools like BitLocker, TrueCrypt, or Apple's Filevault, and choose a strong passphrase. On your phone—preferably an iPhone, given Apple's track record of foiling federal cracking—set a strong PIN and disable Siri from the lockscreen by switching off "Access When Locked" under the Siri menu in Settings.

Remember also to turn your devices off before entering customs: Hard drive encryption tools only offer full protection when a computer is fully powered down. If you use TouchID, your iPhone is safest when it's turned off, too, since it requires a PIN rather than a fingerprint when first booted, resolving any ambiguity about whether border officials can compel you to unlock the device with a finger instead of a PIN—a real concern given that green card holders are required to offer their fingerprints with every border crossing.

Keep Passwords Secret

This is the tricky part. American citizens can't be deported for refusing to give up an encryption or social media password, says the ACLU's Wessler. That means if you stand your ground and don't reveal passwords or PINs, you may be detained and your devices confiscated—even sent off to a forensic facility—but you'll eventually get through with your privacy far more intact than if you divulge secrets. "They can seize your device, even for months while they try to break into it," says Wessler. "But you're going to get home."

Be warned, however, that denying customs officials access can at the very least lead to hours of uncertain detention in a bleak, windowless CBP office. And for visa and even green card holders, the right to enter the US is far less

clear. "If they truly want to come into America, then they'll cooperate," DHS secretary Kelly told Congress last Tuesday. "If not, you know, next in line." If the DHS does adopt that hardline policy of privacy invasion, it could leave non-citizens without easy answers.

Phone Home

Before going into customs, alert a lawyer or a loved one who can contact a lawyer, and contact them again when you get out. If you are detained, you may not be able to access your devices or otherwise have the opportunity to reach the outside world. And in the worst case scenario of a lengthy detention, you'll want someone advocating for your release and legal representation.

Make a Travel Kit

For the most vulnerable travelers, the best way to keeping customs away from your data is simply not to carry it. Instead, like Lackey, set up travel devices that store the minimum of sensitive data. Don't link those "dirty" devices to your personal accounts, and when you do have to create a linked account—as with iTunes for iOS devices—create fresh ones with unique usernames and passwords. "If they ask for access and you can't refuse, you want to be able to give them access without losing any sensitive information," says Lackey.

Social media accounts, admittedly, can't be so easily ditched. Some security experts recommend creating secondary personas that can be offered up to customs officials while keeping a more sensitive account secret. But if CBP agents do link your identity with an account you tried to hide, the result could be longer detention and, for non-citizens, even denial of entry.

Deny Yourself Access

Better than telling customs officials that you won't offer access to your accounts, says security researcher and forensics expert Jonathan Zdziarski, is to tell them you can't. One somewhat extreme method he suggests is to set up two-factor authentication for your sensitive accounts, so that accessing them requires entering not only a password but a code sent to your phone via text message. Then, before you cross the border, make sure you don't have the SIM card that allows you—or customs officials—to receive that text message, essentially denying yourself the ability to cooperate with agents even if you wanted to. Zdziarski suggests mailing yourself the SIM card, or destroying it and then recovering the accounts with backup codes you leave at home (for American residents) or keep in an encrypted account online. "If you ditch your SIM before you approach the border, you can give them any password you want and they won't be able to get access," Zdziarski says. He cautions, however, that he's never tested that know-nothing strategy in the face of angry CBP agents.

Those more involved subversion techniques, warns University of California at Davis law professor Elizabeth Joh, also create the risk that you'll also arouse more suspicion, making CBP agents all the more likely to detain you or deny entrance to the country. But she has no better answer. "There's not that much you can do when you cross the border in terms of the government's power," she admits.

'There's still no good set of protections for a portal into your private life.'

Elizabeth Joh, UC-Davis Law Professor

In fact, the issue of privacy rights for digital devices at the border remains troublingly unsettled, Joh says. While the Supreme Court decision in Riley vs. California in 2014 declared warrantless searches of devices at the time of arrest unconstitutional, no case has set such a precedent for the American border—much less for non-Americans seeking those same privacy rights.

Until such a precedent is set, that border zone will remain in a kind of legal limbo. The government has the power to open bags crossing into its territory or even dismantle cars to search for contraband, she points out. "What does that mean in an age when people bring their digital devices across borders? The Supreme Court hasn't spoken to that issue," Joh says. "The real problem here is there's still no good set of protections for a portal into your private life."

GOP Senator: Physical Border Wall 'Would Rate Very Low' Among Texans

By Nikita Vladimirov

The Hill, February 12, 2017

Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), the No. 2 Republican in the Senate, believes that constructing a physical wall on the U.S.-Mexico border would not rate high among Texans.

"I think people would say, if you are talking about a physical wall, it would rate very low. Because I think most people in Texas understand that our 1,200-mile border is not ... the same at every point along the way," Cornyn, the Senate majority whip, said in an interview Sunday with John Catsimatidis on AM 970 in New York.

Cornyn said that he agreed with Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly's view for a "layered approach" that would consist of "fencing, technology and boots on the ground."

The Texas lawmaker also said that President Trump should have a right to implement his executive order that suspends immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries, but noted that the measure was rushed by the White House.

"Well, I think the executive order is clearly within the president's authority, although I think they got in a big hurry," he said.

"I think there is a lot of people trying to create misunderstanding, some have said that this is ... a ban based on religion, which it's not, because it applies to only seven

countries and countries with failed governments which are a source of a lot of international terrorism," he added.

A federal just in Seattle issued a temporary restraining order on the ban earlier this month, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit refused the government's request to immediately reinstate the ban.

"I think the president is within his right to hit the pause button and say we need to double-check these folks ... in the interest of national security," Cornyn reiterated.

During the interview, the lawmaker also praised Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court, vowing that "one way or another, Judge [Neil] Gorsuch will be confirmed."

"The president's nominee is about the best nominee I've ever seen for the Unites States Supreme Court ... he is really up there," Cornyn said.

US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Dreamers Visit Mexico Under Program That May Come To End Under Trump

San Diego Union-Tribune, February 10, 2017

Yeraldin Montiel doesn't remember arriving in the United States as a child.

The 29-year-old Escondido resident said that when she came at age 8 with her sister and cousins, she slept through the border crossing. She didn't know until her senior year of high school that she did not have legal status in the U.S.

In college, many of her friends studied abroad, she said, but she couldn't because of her status.

"I remember telling myself, 'One day I'm going to be able to do that,'" Montiel said. "'I'm going to travel on my own outside of the country.'"

In the weeks leading up to President Donald Trump's inauguration, Montiel fulfilled that promise to herself, traveling to Mexico on a study abroad program for participants in former President Barack Obama's deferred action for childhood arrivals program, or DACA.

The program allows certain unauthorized immigrants who arrived as children temporary relief from deportation for renewable two-year periods and gives them work permits. Obama instituted it with an executive order, and Trump promised on the campaign trail to shut it down.

In California, about 500,000 unauthorized immigrants are eligible for DACA, and they are commonly referred to as "dreamers."

Armando Vazquez-Ramos, a California State University Long Beach professor, launched the dreamer travel program through his nonprofit, the California-Mexico Studies Center, after learning in 2014 that he could safely cross the border with deferred action students. Beneficiaries of Obama's program have been eligible to apply for "advanced parole," meaning they will be let back into the country if they leave, for educational or humanitarian reasons.

Montiel's group may be the last set of dreamers that Vazquez-Ramos leads abroad. Vazquez-Ramos is holding off on organizing his next trip until he learns what action Trump takes on DACA.

"It's all up in the air right now," Vazquez-Ramos said. "After these executive actions he's already ordered, it's unpredictable."

Most of the students think the best part of the experience is reconnecting with their roots, Vazquez-Ramos said, but he sees a greater benefit: Those who come back into the country on advanced parole have a legal entry into the country on record, so if someone like a spouse or younger sibling born in the U.S. petitions for them to get green cards, they don't have to wait outside the U.S. to get approved.

"That to me is what has the most value," he said.

Most unauthorized immigrants who marry U.S. citizens do not end up applying for green cards because of the requirement to leave the country, Vazquez-Ramos said.

"Sometimes it takes months. You go back, and you're stuck and your family is separated," he said. "You can imagine the trauma involving that or the economic hardship that that can be."

He estimated that half a dozen of the more than 100 students who have participated in the program have already successfully obtained green cards, though he said he's still reaching out to past participants for a full tally.

His program is selective about who gets to go, he said. He receives about 300 applications for each trip, he said, and he takes on average about 30 students.

Montiel, the only San Diego County resident who participated in that final trip before Trump took office, said the possibility of adjusting her status wasn't the motivating factor for her to go on the trip.

"I grew up with this idea or mentality of what Mexico is," she said. "When you're actually there, you see Mexico through different eyes, and you see Mexico isn't what you see in the media or what people tell you."

Before the trip, she said, she related to the expression, "ni de aquí, ni de allá" — not from here and not from there. Now, that's changed.

"Now I can say, 'Soy de aquí y allá,'" Montiel said. "That's one of the biggest things I bring back is that I'm from both sides."

The group left shortly before Christmas and spent the first half of the trip visiting family members. Then they regrouped for lectures and field trips to learn more about the history, politics and culture of Mexico before writing a paper about their experiences.

Vazquez-Ramos also brought in a couple of psychologists to help the group deal with emotions that he said are common to those in the deferred action program, like guilt and resentment.

"There's so much baggage, so much emotional issues that are in everybody's mind," Vazquez-Ramos said. "Put yourself in their shoes, living with a scarlet letter."

Montiel worked through college, paying for it herself because her status meant she didn't qualify for student aid or loans, and her family couldn't afford the cost of tuition. She applied for DACA in 2013.

When she started college, Montiel said, she kept her status to herself until she met a professor who inspired her to share her story.

"I want to show people who are still in the shadows that they can come out and share their status, to show we're here and moving forward and not to be afraid," Montiel said. "If I made it this far, they can also make it this far."

If Trump decides to deport deferred action recipients, she said, she'll go back to Mexico, but she would rather stay in the U.S.

"I grew up here in the United States," Montiel said. "I belong here."

Federal Studies: Intel Agencies Lack Data To Assess Whether Syrian Refugees Are Lying

Breitbart, February 12, 2017

"In other words, we cannot screen against information we do not have," reads the House Homeland Security Committee's Final Report of the Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel.

The contents of the report, issued September 2015, received little news media attention. The details are newly relevant in light of the controversy surrounding President Donald Trump's executive order temporarily halting the refugee program while government agencies revamp the flawed screening process.

Separately, a June 13, 2016 government document prepared by the Congressional Research Service for members and committees of Congress warns that U.S. agencies have limited resources to confirm biographical claims provided by Syrian refugee applicants.

The Obama Administration has noted that refugees experience a more "rigorous screening than anyone else we allow into the United States." Administration officials have asserted that federal agencies are involved in additional screening of Syrian refugees. For example, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services within DHS conducts enhanced reviews of potential Syrian refugees.

However, congressional critics have noted that such enhancements may not be enough, especially because U.S. intelligence agencies know relatively little about the people in Syria and Iraq who are involved with the Islamic State and have limited/no resources in Syria that can confirm the information provided by refugee applicants.

The Congressional briefing document was titled, "Islamic State's Acolytes and the Challenges They Pose to U.S. Law Enforcement."

That document referenced the House's Final Report by the Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel.

The Congressional Task Force report found that U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies "remain concerned about terrorists posing as refugees."

"Agencies have made improvements to the refugee security screening process, but more must be done to mitigate potential vulnerabilities," the report states.

The final report took note of news articles in which members of the Islamic State have openly boasted about the possibility of using refugees to infiltrate the West.

The report states:

The Task Force recognizes terrorist infiltration into the United States through the refugee process is less likely than other routes and more time intensive for extremists, but these threats must be kept in mind during the refugee screening process. Such tactics would not be new for terrorist groups, and more than four million people have fled the conflict zone in Syria, offering extremists ample opportunity to blend into migrant groups. …

Law enforcement and intelligence officials have expressed concern publicly and privately to Task Force Members that our refugee screening process has inherent vulnerabilities, particularly in war-torn countries where we have little intelligence on the ground. The lack of information makes it difficult to conduct high-confidence background checks on potential refugees. In other words, we cannot screen against information we do not have.

The Task Force recommended that government agencies set forth "clear plans to enhance background reviews and outline how domestic agencies like the FBI will be involved in mitigating any risks associated with populations of concern which are granted entry."

Another Congressional Research Service document, this one form November 7, 2016, outlines the main screening procedures used to check the backgrounds of foreigners, including refugees.

One central tool is the Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB). Other "lookout" databases draw from the TDSB, including data housed at the National Counterterrorism Center's Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment.

The document explains the TSDB, managed by the FBI, includes "biographic identifiers for those known either to have or be suspected of having ties to terrorism. In some instances, it also includes biometric information on such people."

However, to make it into the TDSB and other databases, the paper documents, sufficient identifiers must exist.

"At the very least, for inclusion in the TSDB a record must have a last name and at least one additional piece of identifying information (for example a first name or date of birth)," the Congressional document states.

In other words, the database relies in large part on existing intelligence information on suspected terrorists.

Trump's January 27 executive order halts visas for 90 days for "immigrants and non-immigrants" from Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, Iran and Iraq. The order further suspended the entry of all refugees for 120 days, indefinitely blocked Syrian refugees from entering and lowered the ceiling to 50,000 for refugees allowed to enter the U.S. during Fiscal Year 2017.

Last week, an appeals court in San Francisco upheld an original court ruling that temporarily restrained Trump's executive order.

Venezuela Now Leads US Asylum Requests As Crisis Deepens

By Joshua Goodman | Ap

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

Venezuelans for the first time led asylum requests to the United States as the country's middle class fled the crashing, oil-dependent economy.

Data from the U.S. government's Citizenship and Immigration Services show that 18,155 Venezuelans submitted asylum requests last year, a 150 percent increase over 2015 and six times the level seen in 2014. China was second place, with 17,745 requests coming from citizens of that country.

Venezuela first cracked the top 10 asylum-seeking nations following months of sometimes bloody street protests in early 2014 seeking to oust President Nicolas Maduro.

But back then, amid the widespread jailing and harassment of opponents of the socialist administration, fewer than 100 Venezuelans per month sought asylum. That compares with 2,334 requests in December, 2016, the last month for which data is available.

The number of applicants has skyrocketed since December 2015, when the opposition took control of congress in a landslide election, giving hope to many that it could disrupt 17 years of socialist rule. Instead of reaching out to his opponents, Maduro retrenched and more and more Venezuelans began to uproot as triple-digit inflation pulverized salaries and widespread food and medicine shortages made life unbearable for many.

The vast majority leaving are middle-class Venezuelans who don't qualify for refugee status reserved for those seeking to escape political persecution, according to Julio Henriquez, director of the Boston-based nonprofit Refugee Freedom Program, which has been drawing attention to the trend.

"The pace at which requests are increasing is alarming," said Henriquez, whose group obtained the still-unpublished data in a Feb. 8 meeting between U.S. officials and immigration lawyers. "It's not just worrisome that so many people are escaping the terrible situation in Venezuela but also that the practice of sending asylum-seekers with poor advice and false proof is proliferating."

Still, given mounting hardships at home, increasing numbers of Venezuelans are willing to take advantage of a more-than-two-year delay for their applications to be processed to obtain work authorization and seek short-term employment even if it means being eventually deported.

In the 2015 fiscal year, Venezuela was among the top 10 countries whose citizens had overstayed their visas in the United States, according to an estimate of visa overstays by the Department of Homeland Security.

Venezuelans seeking U.S. asylum represent a small share of the overall Venezuelan immigrant population, some of whom have made their home in the U.S. for decades.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

IMMIGRATION

Thousands March Against Trump In Mexico City: 'Pay For Your Own Wall!'

By Patrick J. McDonnell, Contact Reporter

Los Angeles Times, February 12, 2017

Thousands of demonstrators waving Mexican flags and signs denouncing President Trump marched through central Mexico City on Sunday, the largest mobilization in the capital to date against the controversial polices of the Trump White House.

"We are not against the American people: This is about Trump, who is spreading hate and division," said Maria Garcia, a former resident of Chicago who carried an unflattering, paper-mache likeness of the U.S. president. "The United States and Mexico are natural friends and allies, but Trump is destroying this."

Organizers dubbed the march "Vibra Mexico" (roughly, Mexican vibe), and mounted an aggressive social media campaign encouraging people to attend. Police turned out in force to maintain security.

Protesters hoisted signs declaring, "Respect, Mexico" and "We are all Mexico" as they marched down Paseo de la Reforma, the capital's elegant, tree-lined main street.

The turnout and emotion were indicative of the widespread indignation that Trump's various policies—widely

viewed here as anti-Mexican-- have sparked south of the border.

"Trump, pay for your own wall!" declared one sign in English, a reference to the president's plan to build a new barrier along the almost 2,000-mile frontier between the two nations.

The proposal has been a flashpoint of criticism here. The Mexican government has rebuffed Trump's declarations that Mexico would pay for the wall.

One woman carried a sign stating: "Over there they call it a wall. Here we call it a grave."

Along with the wall, Trump's plans to step up deportations, slap a tariff on products imported from Mexico and renegotiate trade deals with Mexico have all angered many in Mexico and raised fears of an economic collapse. The Mexican peso has been steadily declining in value against the U.S. dollar since Trump began rising in the U.S. electoral polls late last year.

"I came here on my birthday because Trump is trying to divide people, and I'm against that," said Arleen Ledezma, 31, a Mexican American hairdresser from Tucson who carried a sign declaring in Spanish: "My nationality is the United States but my roots are Mexican." She said she flew down for the day to show solidarity.

From a loudspeaker, an activist declared: "Donald Trump must respect the dignity of Mexico!"

The march was one of two major anti-Trump mobilizations planned for Sunday.

Some stayed away from the demonstrations, viewing them as too supportive of the administration of President Enrique Peña Nieto, who is suffering from near record-low approval ratings amid concerns about corruption, violence and rising prices. While some have expressed support for the president, others have argued that he should take a stronger posture against Trump.

"This is in no means an event to back the president," said Manuel Cevallos, 62, a teacher who said he lived two decades in Southern California, and was attending the rally. "We need a real president who defends the rights of Mexicans, who stands up to Trump."

Peña Nieto, who was not expected to attend the march, has spoken repeatedly of "unity" in recent days. He and other Mexican leaders have vowed to help deported compatriots returning to Mexico and to bolster aid for Mexican immigrants in the United States. But there is little Mexican officials can do to curb Trump's plans to build a wall and accelerate deportations.

Still, many participants in Sunday's demonstrations said it was important to show a unified front against what many Mexicans view as a hostile administration in Washington.

"Trump does not have the right to treat Mexicans like we are all delinquents, to humiliate us," said Jose Acevez, 64, expressing a sentiment voiced by many marchers. "We Mexicans have dignity and we demand respect. We are a united nation. We know how to unite in difficult moments."

Mexicans March To Protest Trump — But Also Their Own Leaders And Politicians

By David Agren

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

MEXICO CITY — Thousands of Mexicans took to the streets of their capital and other cities Sunday afternoon to denounce President Trump's depictions of them as "rapists" and robbers and to demand "the respecting of Mexico."

But according to much of the pre-protest chatter, many Mexicans planned to protest their own unpopular president and political class rather than Trump – even as the U.S. leader proceeds with plans for building a border wall and continues to target the country's currency and economy with barbed tweets.

Vibra México (roughly, Mexico Moves), a "nonpartisan" and "respectful" protest organized by more than 70 civic groups, universities and nongovernment organizations, envisaged a protest that would condemn Trump's treatment of Mexico, but also demand more of Mexican politicians.

The balance was proving difficult to maintain Sunday, however. Even with the perceived Trump threat looming, hashtags criticizing the Vibra México protest were trending on Twitter and march organizers were pleading with protesters to recognize Trump as the primary worry.

"Mexicans are outraged by many things. We're outraged by poverty, we're outraged by inequality, we're outraged by impunity," said Enrique Graue, rector of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the country's largest public university and part of the Vibra México coalition. "The point is: What outrages us most? At this time, we're most outraged by the treatment Mexico has received from the U.S. president."

Organizers of a rival march in Mexico City, calling itself México Unido, or Mexico United, agree — although they explicitly called for support for President Enrique Peña Nieto, whose approval rating has plunged to 12 percent.

"Dirty laundry is washed at home," Laura Herrejón, an advocate for the México Unido march, told broadcaster Televisa.

Polls show a deep dislike of Trump south of the border, but many Mexicans voice more discontent about domestic matters than about disrespect from a foreign leader.

Trump's election coincided with mass protests over a 20 percent hike in the government-set gasoline price, accusations that governors in eight states were pilfering the public purse and stories of politicians paying themselves inexplicable bonuses — in a country with a minimum wage of $4 per day.

FOIA CBP 000815

Analysts are skeptical that castigating a foreign villain will change many Mexicans' minds about their political class, who are being accused of weakness in the face of Trump and his threats.

"Trump is being presented as Mexico's main problem. The main problem for most Mexicans is Peña Nieto," said Ilán Semo, history professor at the Iberoamerican University. "They won't back the current regime because there's a feeling that Peña Nieto and his team are going to use the nationalist script to try to rebuild some sort of consensus."

Vibra México organizers stressed that their march is open to everyone, have called on the president provide "transparency" in his negotiations with Trump and demanded that his government "come to terms with inequality, corruption, impunity and human rights abuses."

But it's been a tough sell, and organizers have had to fend off allegations they are not interested in protesting injustices at home. Some supporters have tried scaring and shaming people off the sidelines and into the streets, including historian and public intellectual Enrique Krauze, who tweeted, "Not marching projects passivity, indifference and even cowardice."

"DON'T FORGET: Mexico lost the war of 1847 and half its territory due to all the internal divisions," tweeted Krauze, who has called Trump the biggest foreign threat to Mexico since President James K. Polk, instigator of the Mexican-American War.

The admonitions highlight the consensus coalescing among Mexico's elite on the Trump topic, with media, the business class and religious leaders calling for unity. Billionaire Carlos Slim – who dined with Trump at the president's Florida retreat, Mar-a-Lago, in December – told the media in a rare news conference: "We have to back [Peña Nieto]. All of the country has to do so in the face of a special risk in U.S. relations we have not seen in 100 years."

Peña Nieto has often pleaded for unity, although his staid and formal speaking style and staged events featuring elites and politicians pledging support often fail to move the masses. His surrogates seldom do much better.

"Mr. President, president of all Mexicans, and with this applause we're giving you, we have shown that you are the president of all Mexicans. Congratulations for that, you have our confidence," gushed Carlos Aceves de Olmo, an old-school union boss invited to speak at an event outlining Mexico's "position on foreign policy" in the Trump era.

Social media reacted with snark, along with memes from Aceves de Olmo's appearance two weeks earlier with Peña Nieto, where the union boss was spotted wearing a $20,000 watch as he complained of workers' stagnant wages.

Much of the anti-Trump talk has come from politicians, who proposed not buying Ford vehicles after due to the automaker withdrew withdrawing a $1.6 billion investment in Mexico and have bashed Trump piñatas in high-profile stunts.

"[Trump's] not only ignorant. He's not only an imperialist, he's not even a good Christian," shouted Hugo Eric Flores, leader of Encuentro Social, a party founded by evangelical pastors, at an Inauguration Day protest.

Many Mexicans seem less alarmed by the Trump threats than by their politicians, although nascent signs of action are emerging. Plans for boycotts have trended on Twitter — most notably "Adiós Starbucks" — while the story of a woman turning in her tourist visa to the U.S. Consulate in Hermosillo was widely lauded.

Tijuana residents observed #UnasHorasporMéxico ("A few hours for Mexico") Feb. 5, boycotting U.S. companies and staying on the Mexican side of the border, Mexican media reported.

But anger about Mexican issues is still strong.

"Trump doesn't trigger much anger in me," said Gerardo Priego Tapía, a former congressman with the right-leaning National Action Party (PAN). "What p****s me off much more is union leaders, thieving governors, mayors getting rich every three years and police allied with criminals.

"I'm convinced the enemy is here at home, not abroad."

Marchers Across Mexico Vent Anger Over Trump, And Their Own President

By David Alire Garcia

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Mexico's Lopez Obrador Blasts Trump's Immigration Policies At LA Rally

Reuters, February 13, 2017

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

Mexicans March Against Trump: 'Bad Hombre For The Whole World'

By Patrick Gillespie

CNN, February 12, 2017

Mexicans took to the streets Sunday to air their grievances against President Donald Trump and to protest corruption in their home country.

Two separate demonstrations, which together drew an estimated 20,000 people, merged on Mexico City's main avenue, Paseo de la Reforma, in a march mostly focused on the new US President.

Marchers convened on the avenue near the US embassy, where riot police and barricades were staked out. A sea of Mexican flags and anti-Trump signs surrounded one of the city's main monuments, the Angel of Independence, a

FOIA CBP 000816

block from the embassy. One man burned a doll of Trump, drawing smiles from the crowd.

'Mexico has never been so threatened'

Some marchers wore shirts that read "Nasty Woman Keep Fighting."

"We are sending a message to Donald Trump: No wall. No immigrant raids. No aggression to Mexico," said Denise Dresser, a professor in Mexico City who made 350 of the shirts with donations. "Mexico has never been so threatened and never have we had a government so incompetent."

The march comes amid protests in the United States against Trump and the administration's deportations of undocumented immigrants as well as his executive order barring travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations from entering the country.

Trump argued Sunday that the deportations should come as no surprise. "The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise," the President tweeted.

Speaking about Trump on Sunday, Mexicans young and old pulled no punches, saying the President's rhetoric towards women, Mexicans and Muslims is among their top concerns.

"He's pathetic. He's a very little man, and I'm sure he's insane," said protester Ines Carrasco, 25. "What concerns me most is that he's spewing hate."

Trump's treatment of undocumented immigrants was the prime complaint among the protesters. His plan to make Mexicans pay for a border wall has also drawn the ire of many here.

"No, you're going to pay for the wall," said Alberto Madero, 59, holding a sign that read "We will not pay for your [expletive] wall."

Beyond immigration, protesters were also concerned about the possibility of new taxes on Mexican goods and remittances, as well as the prospect of the United States withdrawing from a trade deal with Mexico.

Some simply don't understand why Trump has focused so much of his criticism on Mexico.

"I'm worried about Trump. He's a racist, he's discriminating against us," said Ruben Rua, 58. "What have we done to the United States for them to treat us like this?"

Nearly 80% of Mexicans believe relations between the US and Mexican will be worse in the Trump era than during President Obama's term in office, according to a poll conducted last month by Mexican newspaper El Universal.

Anger against President Peña Nieto

Some of the protesters were also marching against the Mexican government. President Enrique Peña Nieto only has a 12% approval rating – the lowest any Mexican President has had since polls were first collected in 1995.

Mexicans waved flags that read "Fuera Peña" or "Peña Out." Accusations of government corruption, coupled with anger over his handling of the disappearance of 43 Mexican students in 2014, have sunk his approval ratings. Protests against his administration have been a recurring event in the capital in recent months.

Also harming Peña Nieto's popularity this year was his administration's decision to increase gas prices as much as 20% in January, as part of a plan to deregulate the energy sector.

The price hike – dubbed 'el gasolinazo' – sparked violent protests across Mexico, resulting in at least 1,500 arrests and six deaths in the first month of the year. Protests got so out of hand in Tijuana last week that US authorities decided to temporarily close the border.

Another price hike is scheduled for next week. The initial increase in gas prices triggered a ripple effect of higher prices for food and public transportation.

Mexican citizens in United States warned to 'take precautions'

Sunday's march also came as citizens are rallying behind a Mexican mother who was deported Thursday and separated from her two American children.

Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos was deported after a routine check-in with an office of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Phoenix.

US immigration officials say there was nothing special about the case of Garcia de Rayos. Prior to Thursday, she had checked in with the immigration office seven times since a 2008 arrest for using a fake social security number.

On Friday, Mexico's foreign ministry warned its citizens in the US to "take precautions" and keep in touch with Mexican consulates in America, citing Garcia de Rayos as a cautionary tale.

"The case involving Mrs. Garcia de Rayos illustrates a new reality for the Mexican community living in the United States, facing the most severe implementation of immigration control measures," Mexico's Foreign Ministry said in a statement Friday.

On Sunday, marchers like Maria Eugenia Montes de Oca used Trump's own words to protest against him.

"Trump: Bad hombre for the whole world," Montes de Oca's sign read.

Mexican Migrants Signal They Prefer Detention To Deportation

Illegal immigrants meet with Mexican officials in Phoenix, discuss options under Trump administration

By José De Córdoba

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Migrating North, But To Mexico, Not The US

By Kirk Semple

FOIA CBP 000817

New York Times, February 12, 2017

SALTILLO, Mexico — Wendy no longer worries that when her sons leave the apartment in the morning, they may never make it to school. Memories of the gangs that haunted their lives in Honduras are slowly receding into the past.

The family fled its home last year after gang members tried to recruit the boys, threatening them with death if they did not join. They received asylum in Mexico, making them among the country's newest residents.

"It's not easy — as you can imagine — starting again," Wendy said in an interview in this small city in northeastern Mexico, where the family decided to settle. "But we are better here because we are safer."

The United States has long been the dream destination for many Latin American migrants, whether fleeing poverty, political unrest, natural disaster or violence. But now a growing number of migrants are putting down roots in Mexico, legally or illegally, instead of using it as a thruway to the United States.

They have many reasons for staying here. Crossing the Mexico-United States border has become increasingly difficult, migrants say, especially with rising smugglers' fees and tougher enforcement. Some are deterred by the abundance of dangers that lurk on the route through Mexico. Some believe it might be easier to qualify for some form of legal status in Mexico than in the United States.

In recent weeks, yet another factor has begun to weigh on some northbound migrants: President Trump. Even if all the details of his recent policy declarations on immigration have not yet permeated the migration grapevine, his longstanding promises to restrict immigration have fueled a growing perception among migrants that the United States is becoming far less hospitable to immigrants, documented and undocumented alike.

"Here, at least, the people like you, they help you," said Josué, 31, an undocumented immigrant from Honduras staying at Casa del Migrante, a migrant shelter here in Saltillo. "Why would you want to go to a country that doesn't like you?"

(Like other migrants interviewed, Josué requested partial anonymity, in his case because of his undocumented status. Others said they feared being tracked down by their persecutors.)

Josué came to Mexico about a year ago with the intention of "passing through" on his way to the United States, he said. But he was able to find work and liked Mexico enough, so he decided to stay for a while before resuming his trip.

With the rise of Mr. Trump, however, and the president's vows to harden the borders of the United States and step up deportations, Josué has decided to remain in Mexico for the foreseeable future.

"In my case, I'd like to be in the United States to work," he said during a recent interview at the shelter. "But this president, he doesn't want anybody because he doesn't like anybody." Josué is now exploring ways to gain legal status in Mexico.

The number of migrants deciding to stay in Mexico is still thought to be a small fraction of the hundreds of thousands using the country as a transit corridor to enter the United States.

But the growing attractiveness of Mexico is plainly reflected in the country's asylum program. Last year, more than 8,100 foreigners applied for asylum, nearly three times as many as in 2015, and more than 15 times as many as five years ago, according to statistics from the Mexican government.

At the same time, Mexico, under pressure from immigrants' advocates, has been granting asylum at increasingly higher rates, in part because of improvements to its intake and processing system. In 2016, 63 percent of applicants, not including those who dropped their cases during the review process, received asylum or some other form of protection, up from 46 percent in 2015.

Most applicants in the last few years have been from El Salvador and Honduras, which have been convulsing with gang violence.

The increase in asylum petitions in Mexico is also in part due to the rise in detentions on the country's southern flank, an effect of an American-backed plan begun in 2014 to better control the flow of people and goods crossing the Mexico-Guatemala border. After being stopped by the immigration authorities, some detainees have come to learn that they may be eligible for asylum, either through word of mouth from other detainees or during screenings with immigration officials.

"Many come here not knowing that the experiences they've had fit perfectly with asylum," said Javier Martínez Hernández, a lawyer at Casa del Migrante, which helped more than 100 migrants apply for refugee status in 2016, more than double the number in 2015.

If the current trends continue, United Nations officials predict, Mexico could receive more than 20,000 asylum claims this year.

But advocacy and human rights groups believe that the population of migrants potentially eligible for protection in Mexico is much higher.

Many of the more than 147,000 foreigners deported from Mexico last year, for instance, might not have known that they qualified and were not given the opportunity to make their case before being deported, they say.

In the past year, the Mexican government has made a number of improvements to its asylum system, including increasing its staff and modifying the screening process to

ensure that eligible migrants have a chance to apply, officials said.

The Mexican authorities have also begun releasing asylum seekers from detention while they await the resolution of their cases, a process that often takes three or more months, and have improved applicants' access to humanitarian aid and psychological and legal counseling, advocates said.

"The Mexican government has recognized that this is increasingly a refugee situation," said Mark Manly, the Mexico representative for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He added that the Mexican authorities had been making "real progress" in improving processing and services for asylum seekers.

The government and the United Nations have sponsored a pilot program in Saltillo to help integrate asylum seekers into Mexican society. Begun in August, the program has so far involved 38 asylum recipients. Of those, 26 remain in the program, while the others have left and moved elsewhere.

Saltillo was chosen because it has plenty of employment opportunities and is relatively calm and safe, United Nations officials said.

Several program participants said life in Mexico was not easy, despite all the assistance they had received. It is hard to make ends meet; salaries at the bottom rung of the ladder are barely enough to cover the cost of living. And some, in the interest of disconnecting from the menacing world they left, have cut off all contact with friends, relatives and old colleagues in their home countries.

"It's very sad to leave everything in your country," said Ana, 41, a Salvadoran who immigrated to Mexico with her son, 18, and her two daughters, 15 and 21, after gangs tried to recruit her son and started threatening one of her daughters.

"Can you imagine? We had everything," Ana added. "My children studying and then coming here and sleeping on the ground? It's not easy."

But all said they were happier in Mexico, in large part because they did not fear for their lives.

"I left all my friends and family, but after what happened, it made me happy to leave," said Ana's son, Fernando, who found work here cleaning rooms in a hotel. His older sister, who had been planning to enter a university in El Salvador to study medicine, works in the laundry room at another hotel.

Still, for many, the allure of the United States is hard to extinguish.

Wendy and her husband, José, have both found work — he with an air-conditioner contractor and she cleaning a private home. The boys are happy in their new school and are making friends. Yet the family is having a hard time covering expenses.

"I still have that aspiration to go to the United States or Canada someday," José allowed as he sat with Wendy in their kitchen here. Both were wearing winter coats indoors because they couldn't afford heaters to warm them against the cold.

Wendy saw where the conversation was heading — down a road they had clearly traveled many times — and she intervened.

"Our idea is to have our own home, build our own business. That's the idea," she said enthusiastically. "If we had a home of our own, I'd stay here for the rest of my life."

Republican Green-card Holder Who Voted Illegally In Texas Gets 8 Years In Prison

Washington Post, February 11, 2017

A permanent U.S. resident living in Texas has been sentenced to eight years in prison for illegally voting, a punishment that will probably result in the woman's deportation after she completes her sentence.

On Wednesday, a Tarrant County, Tex., jury convicted 37-year-old Rosa Maria Ortega on two felony charges of illegal voting, for casting a ballot as a noncitizen in 2012 and 2014. Ortega is a green-card holder who was brought to the United States from Mexico when she was an infant, her attorney said.

The decision was hailed by some — including Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R), who prosecuted the case — as a sign the state intends to crack down on voter fraud.

"This case shows how serious Texas is about keeping its elections secure, and the outcome sends a message that violators of the state's election law will be prosecuted to the fullest," Paxton said in a statement. "Safeguarding the integrity of our elections is essential to preserving our democracy."

However, Ortega's lawyer and others said the punishment was unusually harsh and meant to appease those who are "swept up in the Trump hysteria where he is trying to find an explanation for why he lost the popular vote."

President Trump has alleged, without evidence, that he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton because 3 million to 5 million illegal ballots were cast against him.

Though his claims about widespread voter fraud have been debunked, that has not stopped Trump from resurrecting them, most recently this past week while speaking with senators in New Hampshire.

Ortega did not vote in the 2016 presidential election, her attorney, Clark Birdsall, told The Washington Post by phone on Saturday.

Ortega was a registered Republican who had been voting for more than a decade, he said. On her voter application, Ortega was faced with only two options — to

mark herself as a 'citizen' or a 'noncitizen' — and didn't know better, he added.

"She doesn't know. She's got this [green] card that says 'resident' on it, so she doesn't mark that she's not a citizen," Birdsall said. "She had no ulterior motive beyond what she thought, mistakenly, was her civic duty."

In 2015, Ortega applied to vote in Tarrant County, indicating on the form that she was not a citizen; her application was rejected, NBC DFW reported at the time. However, five months later, she filled out another form and claimed the second time that she was a citizen, the station reported. A subsequent investigation found she had voted when she wasn't supposed to in Dallas County, the NBC affiliate reported.

Birdsall said Ortega has voted in five elections since 2004, each time casting only a single ballot. Ortega voted for Mitt Romney in the 2012 presidential election and then — somewhat ironically — for Ken Paxton for Texas attorney general in a 2014 Republican primary runoff. Paxton would go on to win and, less than three years later, deal the eight-year sentence to Ortega.

"It's a single vote that she's casting" each time, Birdsall said. "The fact that she got eight years is off the rails."

Related: Trump supporter charged with voting twice in Iowa

Birdsall also claimed he and Paxton had an agreement worked out, in which he would dismiss the felonies as long as Ortega accompanied him to the state legislature and spoke in favor of changing voting procedures.

However, Tarrant County District Attorney Sharen Wilson "killed that resolution," Birdsall said.

What resulted, he said, was an unnecessarily harsh prison sentence that dwarfed punishments most people receive. Birdsall, a former public integrity prosecutor in Dallas County, said he never filed a voter fraud charge in five years.

"These charges are exceedingly rare," he said, citing one past case in which a Houston-area group was sentenced to three years in prison after they listed a hotel as their residence in an effort to sway a local election.

"They were doing some shenanigans that needed to be punished," Birdsall said, of the other case. He said Ortega, who only obtained a sixth-grade education, did not intend to commit a crime.

"Although [Ortega] was arrested in 2015, [the case] didn't reach fruition until right in the middle of all this Trump hysteria," he said. "The timing of this was the perfect storm."

Wilson's office did not immediately respond to an interview request Saturday. A spokeswoman for the district attorney told the New York Times on Friday that there were only "discussions," not negotiations, before Ortega's trial.

Related: There have been just four documented cases of voter fraud in the 2016 election

The sentencing has thrust questions about voter fraud — as well as a controversial voter ID law in Texas — back into the spotlight. In July, a federal appeals court ruled that the state's strict voter-ID law discriminated against minority voters. In January, the Supreme Court declined to review the lower court's ruling.

The Tarrant County district attorney used the case as an example of why stricter laws were needed.

"At a minimum, statements made in applications to vote should be verified before handing out voter registration cards," Wilson said in a statement to the Dallas Morning News. "In all aspects of society, people verify their identity. Why not for voting? This case shows a clear need to enforce the laws we already have."

A 2015 fact-check by PolitiFact found that there had been 85 election fraud prosecutions since 2002, among about 72 million ballots cast in Texas between 2000 and 2014.

"You're more likely to get struck by lightning in Texas than to find any kind of voter fraud," Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) said at the time, according to PolitiFact.

Birdsall said Ortega will probably be deported after serving her sentence because she will be a convicted felon. He plans to start an online crowdfunding page for Ortega, a single mother of four children ages 13 to 16.

They also plan to file an appeal, though the conviction is unlikely to be overturned, he said.

"An appeal is a very uphill battle," Birdsall said. "I don't see any joy at the end of that road, but it will be appealed. We will do our best."

Green Card Holder Who Voted Illegally Could Face Deportation

PBS, February 12, 2017

Last week a Fort Worth, Texas jury convicted a legal permanent resident from Mexico of illegally casting ballots in five elections going back to 2004.

Rosa Maria Ortega, 37, who holds a green card and is married with four children, was sentenced to eight years in prison and could face deportation after serving her time.

Ortega's defense attorney, Clark Birdsall, said President Trump's unsubstantiated claims of widespread voter fraud in last year's elections were the "800-pound gorilla" in the jury box.

Associated Press reporter Paul Weber, who spoke with NewsHour Weekend's Hari Sreenivasan on Sunday, said Ortega had lived in the U.S. "basically since she was an infant" and her decisions to cast ballots over several elections were mistakes.

Elections experts told Weber during his reporting that "they can't recall a penalty this harsh" because of voter fraud, he told Sreenivasan.

"Keep in mind that election fraud is very rare and convictions are even rarer," Weber said. "Most people who are convicted of election fraud typically receive sentences such as probation."

Green-card Holder Who Voted Illegally In Texas Sentenced To 8 Years In Prison

By Brooke Seipel

The Hill, February 11, 2017

A permanent U.S. resident living in Texas was sentenced to eight years in prison for illegally voting in multiple elections over several years, including for Mitt Romney in 2012, though not in the 2016 election.

A Tarrant County jury convicted 37-year-old Rosa Maria Ortega, a green-card holder, on two felony charges of illegal voting for casting a ballot as a noncitizen in 2012 and 2014, The Washington Post reported.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) has applauded the ruling as a crackdown on voter fraud.

Ortega, who was a registered Republican, voted for Paxton for attorney general in a GOP primary runoff in 2014, her attorney told the Post.

Her attorney said that Ortega, a single mother of four teenagers who was brought to the U.S. from Mexico as an infant, will likely be deported after serving her sentence, as she will be a convicted felon.

"This case shows how serious Texas is about keeping its elections secure, and the outcome sends a message that violators of the state's election law will be prosecuted to the fullest," Paxton said in a statement. "Safeguarding the integrity of our elections is essential to preserving our democracy."

Others, however, are slamming the ruling as unusually harsh, criticizing the decision as a forceful example made to prove a point about President Trump's baseless claims of widespread voter fraud, which he has repeated in an attempt to explain why he lost the popular vote in the November election.

"She doesn't know. She's got this [green] card that says 'resident' on it, so she doesn't mark that she's not a citizen," her attorney, Clark Birdsall, told the Post. "She had no ulterior motive beyond what she thought, mistakenly, was her civic duty."

Ortega reportedly cast a single ballot in both elections.

"It's a single vote that she's casting" each time, Birdsall said. "The fact that she got eight years is off the rails."

GOP Shifting On Immigration

By Alexander Bolton

The Hill, February 12, 2017

The politics of immigration in the Senate are shifting in the Trump era.

Sens. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) and David Perdue (R-Ga.), two of President Trump's strongest allies in the Senate, want to dramatically cut the number of green cards issued every year by the United States.

The Raise Act, sponsored by Cotton and Perdue, would cut legal immigration annually over the next decade from 1.05 million (the annual level measured in 2015), to 539,000.

It would prioritize skilled workers and the spouses and minor children of citizens and legal permanent residents over people who want to enter the country based on extended family links.

The sponsors say it would "rebalance" the legal immigration system to bring it more in line with historical averages and increase wages by tightening the labor market.

The Cotton-Perdue bill is a sign of the shifting tides on immigration in the GOP Senate.

Republican have worried that opposition to immigration reform could hurt their party with the nation's growing Latino and Asian populations. But President Trump's victory in the presidential election seemed to offer a different signal.

Proposals to cut down on legal immigration will draw opposition from much of the business community — including Silicon Valley, where for years leaders have called on Washington to increase legal immigration.

And there are opponents in the Senate.

"I oppose the idea of cutting green cards," said Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), a member of the bipartisan Gang of Eight that crafted the 2013 immigration bill. It was approved by the Senate but went nowhere in the House.

Graham says the wave of Baby Boomers expected to retire over the next few years and begin drawing Social Security and Medicare benefits need to be supported by a large work force.

"When you look at the 20-year demographics we're facing, we'll have an aging population and a declining work force," he said.

Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) warned the Cotton-Perdue proposal would stifle innovation.

"I just don't agree with it," he said.

"I think we need more Sergey Brins and people like that who were born outside of this country, came here, received an education and made enormous progress for all of mankind," he added, making reference to the Soviet-born founder of Google.

The question now is whether there is more support in the Senate GOP for the Graham-McCain view of immigration, or whether the Cotton-Perdue side is winning out.

For years there have been signs of a change.

The first big signal came in 2014 when Rep. Dave Brat (R-Va.), then a little-known challenger, upset former House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) in a Republican primary.

Trump then shocked the political establishment by winning the 2016 GOP nomination and general election. He

FOIA CBP 000821

campaigned on a populist platform that decried the decline of American wages under pressure from uncontrolled immigration.

The Cotton-Perdue legislation is similar to ideas pushed by Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), an early Trump supporter whose colleagues voted to confirm him last week as Attorney General.

During the Senate's immigration debate in 2013, he offered an amendment to cut legal immigration but was outvoted 17 to one.

Sessions is now one of Trump's closest advisors and his former spokesman, Stephen Miller, is now senior policy advisor to Trump.

Cotton, who is emerging as a leading conservative voice in the chamber, is picking up Sessions's mantel. And it appears he could win more votes now than Sessions did four years ago.

The shifting politics of immigration is reflected by the evolution of Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), a member of the Gang of Eight, who was in charge of selling the 2013 Senate bill to Republican conservatives.

He has gone from being a champion of comprehensive immigration reform legislation to someone who now argues that the reform effort should be broken up into pieces.

McCain, by contrast, has argued that comprehensive reform is still the best way to get needed Democratic votes.

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) says he is not enthusiastic about the idea of placing lower caps on the overall number of legal immigrants, including highly skilled workers with H1B visas.

He does, however, like "swapping out some of the family-based visas for skills-based visas.

Rubio spoke the most positively of the Cotton-Perdue bill of the members of the 2013 Gang of Eight.

"As far as the numbers and all that, I don't know there's a magic number. I know the number of immigrants to the United States over the last 30 years is historically high. I'm open about people who think the numbers should be different," he told The Hill.

Republican lawmakers aren't eager for another big debate on immigration but they may not be able to avoid one.

They expect President Trump to address the 750,000 immigrants who are protected from deportation by President Obama's executive order that set up the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

And Trump urged a bipartisan group of senators he met with at the White House Thursday to continue working on immigration legislation.

"I don't think there's any appetite for a big comprehensive piece but some of it is going to be visited upon us," Flake said, citing an impending decision on the DACA kids.

Graham and Sen. Dick Durbin, who worked on the Senate immigration bill in 2013, introduced legislation in December to shield them from deportation but it is not yet scheduled for committee or floor action.

NATIONAL PROTECTION AND PROGRAMS

Rep. Mark Sanford Pushes For REAL ID Reform As Privacy Issues Loom

Washington Examiner, February 13, 2017

The REAL ID Act, which was signed into law nearly 12 years ago, was a post-9/11 reform that sought to bring national standards to driver's licenses and has taken over a decade to be fully implemented.

But one conservative lawmaker believes that what was viewed as a national security safeguard is now a privacy issue to millions of Americans, and one that will complicate their lives within the next year.

Rep. Mark Sanford, R-S.C., has introduced a bill, the REAL ID Privacy Protection Act, to make privacy reforms to the REAL ID Act, including to eliminate document archiving and to allow states to decide against linking their databases nationwide.

"Quite simply, it's to clear up deficiencies we see in REAL ID," Sanford told the Washington Examiner. "This is about the 10th Amendment. This is about the prerogative of states. Something as simple as issuing a driver's license has historically been the sole prerogative of states, not the federal government."

The South Carolina Republican has been against REAL ID since his tenure as the state's governor. However, it has become an issue within the past month as multiple states have seen the law go into effect, leaving many Americans without proper identification to gain access to federal facilities, including military bases and nuclear power plants.

Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security has already begun posting notices to airline passengers that they will need to be REAL ID compliant by January 2018. This could be a rude awakening to travelers throughout the U.S. if changes do not take place within the next year.

"It's important because this doesn't just impact federal installations ... A year later, it's going to impact people's ability to get on an airplane," Sanford said. "You're really going to hear from people at that point."

However, the privacy issue remains the sticking point for the former governor. Sanford argued that Americans have paid a price privacy-wise in exchange for what was promised as a national security need.

"I think a lot of things came out of 9/11 that degraded civil liberty in this country based on a supposed threat of

FOIA CBP 000822

terrorism. In many cases, while these things came at the expense of civil liberty, they didn't add security. They added the false sense of security," Sanford said. "I think archiving personal data for 10 years doesn't in any way increase our security."

At the moment, five states are non-compliant with the act, according to DHS, while 21 have received extensions until June or October to become compliant. However, some states have passed laws forbidding full compliance with REAL ID, creating hurdles for full implementation of the law.

While Sanford and two other House members — Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., and Rep. Chellie Pingree, D-Maine — have made the proposal, he said they have not consulted with President Trump or anyone at the White House as of yet, pointing to the infancy of the administation.

"That's where I think there is latitude," Sanford said when asked about the chances that reforms of some kind could be passed. "I dealt with [former Homeland Security Secretary Michael] Chertoff when this debate took place when I was governor, and there was latitude. Our hope is to get this idea out there so that I can then go to the director of Homeland Security and other people who are like-minded and seek modification relative to where the Obama administration was on this."

TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS

Guantánamo Prison Commander Says He Has No Say In Trump Policy

By Carol Rosenberg

Miami Herald, February 12, 2017

The prison commander said Sunday he has neither seen nor wants a say on any coming Trump administration executive order that will drive policy on law of war detention here.

"Nobody's asked for my opinion," Rear Adm. Peter J. Clarke said at a news conference. A reporter asked the 16th commander of the wartime prison whether he has been provided a draft of President Donald Trump's evolving Guantánamo policy.

He has not. "I don't need to provide my input to policy decisions. I simply need to understand how the policy's going to carried out," he said.

To that end, Clarke said he had yet to receive an order to prepare to receive new captives. The last captive arrived nearly a decade ago, and is held in Guantánamo's most secret prison, Camp 7. The admiral said he expected there would be time to prepare.

"I'm confident that I will get a little more notice than, 'There's a plane in the air that's going to land in four hours' or whatever the case may be," he said. "A few days, if that's all I have, will be adequate for me to receive a small number of detainees."

Guantánamo prison has 41 captives, a staff of 1,650 troops and civilians and current capacity for as many as 200 more war-on-terror detainees.

The New York Times obtained a draft executive order that had the White House authorizing the addition of captives tied to the Islamic State. The detention center currently has 41 captives, all believed tied to al-Qaida or the Taliban, and commanders say that, depending on who arrives and how they might need to be imprisoned, Guantánamo could perhaps absorb 200 more captives.

ISIS emerged after establishment of the prison here under Congress' post- 9/11 Authorization for the Use of Military Force. So it does not explicitly identify the Islamic State as an enemy. Moreover, defense lawyers warn that some of detainees, most in their late 30s and 40s, fear the brutality of ISIS. One compared imprisoning al-Qaida and ISIS members together to jailing the Crips with the Bloods.

Clarke's commanders echoed his comments that no explicit order had been given to prepare for new captives. As a candidate, Trump said he would reverse former President Barack Obama's 2009 closure order and "load it up with bad dudes." The warden, Army Col. Steve Gabavics, said Saturday that even before the election he had his staff review the procedures for in-processing a new arrival as part of typical, periodic military planning.

But the admiral made clear on Sunday morning, a day after four news organizations were given a day's access in and around the Detention Center Zone: "We're not planning right now because we don't know what to plan on. But we have reviewed all of our procedures including capacities and capabilities and tried to identify to the best of our ability what the constraints would be."

Guantánamo has never had female prisoners but some in the command staff have wondered if some might be coming. Clarke was asked if, because it has long been prison practice that female guards don't watch men shower, whether a policy would be adopted to prohibit male soldiers from supervising female captives in the shower.

"We operate gender neutral from a guard force perspective," the admiral replied. "I don't believe there will be any challenges associated with providing female detainees the necessary privacy just like we provide male detainees the necessary privacy right now with female guards present."

Asked whether that reply constituted an assurance that male soldiers would not be supervising female detainee showers, Clarke replied: "I'm not ready to answer that question.

"We will do what is appropriate for safe and humane care and custody. And we will respect detainees' privacy to the maximum extent possible consistent with our security needs."

FOIA CBP 000823

On the evolving executive order, Clarke said it would be unnecessary for a commander at the "tactical level" to weigh in on proposed policy. He said his interests are represented elsewhere — describing a chain of command for implementation of a White House order as from the secretary of defense through the joint staff to the Pentagon's U.S. Southern Command, which has oversight of the detention center currently staffed by 1,650 troops and civilians.

"I think it's going to be overarching policy for whether and how the United States continues detention operations," Clarke said of Trump's coming order. "That policy then has to be distilled into something operational and something technical."

Hamburg Airport Briefly Closed After Dozens Injured By Irritant Gas

By Stephanie Kirchner

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

BERLIN — German officials on Sunday evacuated hundreds of people from Hamburg Airport and briefly closed the facility after dozens of passengers were affected by a substance that authorities said was probably pepper spray disseminated through the air-conditioning system.

Maik Lewerenz, spokesman for the federal police in the northern German city, said that 68 people had experienced eye irritation and breathing difficulties.

Rene Schönhardt, spokesman for the Hamburg police, said there was "no evidence" that the incident was a terrorist attack. Instead, he said, the injuries most likely stemmed from a cartridge containing pepper spray that was found in a bin provided for travelers to dispose of liquids before boarding.

"Nothing else has been found," Schönhardt said. "The fire department didn't detect any dangerous substances."

Werner Nölken, spokesman for the Hamburg fire department, said, "We are not assuming a terrorist attack." The current assumption, he said, was that "some clown, for whatever reason" released pepper spray into an air-conditioning vent, causing the substance to spread.

The cartridge found in the bin was only the size of a lipstick, he said, so it would not have been possible to injure so many people without the air-conditioning system diffusing the gas.

Airport officials said in a statement that an investigation was underway to determine how the substance got into the system.

Passengers and staff in a security luggage-check area began complaining about a bad smell, burning eyes and nausea around 11 a.m., and many were coughing. More than a dozen flights were canceled, and by 12.30 p.m., all the airport terminals had been evacuated.

Flights resumed about 2 p.m., and the terminals were reopened.

Although authorities were quick to rule out a terrorist agenda, the incident shows how easy it is to disrupt everyday life at a time of rising fear of such attacks in Germany. The country has been on edge since the Dec. 19 attack on a Christmas market in Berlin that left 12 people dead and dozens injured.

Revealed: FBI Terrorism Taskforce Investigating Standing Rock Activists

The Guardian (UK), February 10, 2017

The FBI is investigating political activists campaigning against the Dakota Access pipeline, diverting agents charged with preventing terrorist attacks to instead focus their attention on indigenous activists and environmentalists.

The Guardian has established that multiple officers within the FBI's joint terrorism taskforce have attempted to contact at least three people tied to the Standing Rock "water protector" movement in North Dakota.

The purpose of the officers' inquiries into Standing Rock, and scope of the task force's work, remains unknown. Agency officials declined to comment. But the fact that the officers have even tried to communicate with activists is alarming to free-speech experts who argue that anti-terrorism agents have no business scrutinizing protesters.

"The idea that the government would attempt to construe this indigenous-led non-violent movement into some kind of domestic terrorism investigation is unfathomable to me," said Lauren Regan, a civil rights attorney who has provided legal support to demonstrators who were contacted by representatives of the FBI. "It's outrageous, it's unwarranted … and it's unconstitutional."

Regan, who has regularly visited Standing Rock and is the executive director of the Civil Liberties Defense Center in Oregon, said she learned of three cases in which officers with the taskforce, known as the JTTF, tried to talk to activists in person. She described the encounters as attempted "knocks and talks", meaning law enforcement showed up at people's doors without a subpoena or warrant and tried to get them to voluntarily cooperate with an interview.

The three individuals, who include a Native American and a non-indigenous activist, asserted their fifth amendment rights and did not respond to the officers, according to Regan, who declined to identify them to protect their privacy and out of fear of retribution.

Two of them were contacted in North Dakota and a third at their home outside the state, according to Regan. She said all three contacts were made in recent weeks after Trump's inauguration.

Trump, a former investor in Energy Transfer Partners, the Texas-based firm behind the pipeline, took executive action in his first week in office to expedite the project. On

Wednesday, workers began drilling to complete the pipeline across the Missouri river.

The JTTF revelation comes at a time when there have been increasing concerns at Standing Rock about law enforcement surveillance, police violence and the targeted arrests and prosecutions of activists.

Since the summer, law enforcement officials have made roughly 700 arrests, in some cases leading to serious felony charges and possibly lengthy state prison sentences. Following recent indictments, at least six activists are now facing charges in federal court. Rumors about JTTF have caused further stress among the activists.

Regan said she was able to confirm the identity of one of the JTTF officers, Andrew Creed, who attempted to contact an activist. Reached by phone, he declined to comment to the Guardian, saying, "I can't talk to you" before hanging up.

An FBI spokesman, Jeffrey Van Nest, also declined to answer any questions, saying: "We're not in a position to provide a comment as to the existence of an investigation."

In November, a JTTF officer also showed up to the hospital room of Sophia Wilansky, a 21-year-old who was seriously injured during a standoff with law enforcement at Standing Rock, according to her father, Wayne Wilansky. The FBI took her clothes and still have not returned them, he said in an interview this week.

Wayne said he suspected that the FBI brought a terrorism agent given that local police had alleged that activists set off an explosion that caused his daughter's injuries. Witnesses have said they believe she was hit by a police concussion grenade.

The timing of the FBI hospital visit in Minneapolis was upsetting, he added. "It was especially disturbing, because Sophia's blood pressure was going up. She was about to be wheeled into surgery."

Police have repeatedly painted the anti-pipeline movement as dangerous, which is why JTTF may be involved, Regan said.

"From the very beginning, local law enforcement has attempted to justify its militarized presence … by making false allegations that somehow these water protectors were violent."

The attorney said it also seemed likely that JTTF may have contacted other water protectors and said she worried they may not have realized their best option is to remain silent and contact a lawyer.

This is not the first time the JTTF has been tied to an investigation of civil rights protesters. Records from Minnesota suggested that the taskforce monitored a Black Lives Matter demonstration.

For indigenous leaders who have vowed to continue fighting the pipeline on the ground, the FBI investigations and ongoing federal prosecutions have become increasingly worrisome. It's particularly troubling to some given the US government's history of aggressively targeting Native American protesters and turning them into political prisoners.

"This is history repeating itself," said LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, who founded the first camp opposing the pipeline. "I keep on thinking, how we did come to this point? … When did Americans lose their rights? When did America stop following the law?"

Brandy-Lee Maxie, a 34-year-old Nakota tribe member from Canada, said it's difficult not to worry about possible prosecution. But the cause, she said, is too important to give up: "I'm staying here. Whatever happens to those who stay happens. We've just gotta keep praying."

FBI's Terrorism Unit Opens Up Investigation Against Dakota Pipeline Opponents

By Chris White

Daily Caller, February 10, 2017

The FBI is investigating activists associated with the highly publicized Dakota Access Pipeline, according to reports published Friday.

Several agents within the FBI's joint terrorism task force (JTTF) have tried talking to a handful of anti-DAPL activists, ostensibly about their actions opposing the line, according to a report published by The Guardian.

The agency has not revealed any reason for its repeated attempts at contacting the activists. Protests with the months-long pipeline delay have culminated in more than 600 arrests and episodic moments of violence.

Some attorneys believe the JTTF's actions are unconstitutional.

Lauren Regan, the executive director of the Civil Liberties Defense Center, said there are three cases in which the FBI attempted "knocks and talks" allowing agents to show up at activists homes in hopes of securing voluntary interviews.

"The idea that the government would attempt to construe this indigenous-led non-violent movement into some kind of domestic terrorism investigation is unfathomable to me," Regan said. "It's outrageous, it's unwarranted … and it's unconstitutional."

The activists did not respond to the agents, she noted.

Standing Rock Sioux, one of the American Indian tribes opposing the multi-state DAPL, has tried unsuccessfully to vacate activists from make-shift campuses since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers rejected the $3.8 billion project in December.

Opposition to the line grew to a feverish pace after President Donald Trump signed a pair of executive orders in January approving the construction of the DAPL and Keystone XL. His order essentially wiped away the Army Corps' decision.

Law enforcement agents at Morton County have continuously requested help from federal officials to quell what they call periodic violence at the campsites. More than 600 people have been arrested at the campsites over the past several months.

One report from December suggested that North Dakota's former governor, Jack Dalrymple, asked Wisconsin for help dealing with "civil unrest" and "criminal activities related to opposition of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) project."

The North Dakota Republican asked his Wyoming counterpart to send 40 officers to Morton County for assistance quelling what he deemed increasingly violent protests.

Dalrymple also wanted a 40/37 mm chemical munitions launcher, which could have been used to discharge tear gas on anti-DAPL demonstrators. The Morton County sheriff's department used tear gas and high-pressured water hoses during November protests to disperse 400 "very aggressive" activists.

Agitators set nine vehicles ablaze, and destroyed construction equipment and debris on a bridge in October, resulting in the closure of Highway 1806. A woman was arrested in another incident after pulling a pistol from her waistband and firing shots at the police.

North Dakota officials believe that most of the protesters are from out of state. They are looking for evidence that environmentalist groups are paying the protesters to agitate against the DAPL, which is slated to transport nearly 500,000 barrels of Bakken oil from North Dakota to Illinois.

Tax Commissioner Ryan Rauschenberger, for instance, told reporters on Jan. 30 that his office is watching out for tax forms from various environmental groups opposing the project.

"It's something we're looking at. I can tell you I've had a number of conversations with legislators regarding this very issue," Rauschenberger said. "[We're] looking at the entities that have potential paid contractors here on their behalf doing work."

Ex-Guardsman Gets 11 Years For Islamic State Group Support

Associated Press, February 10, 2017

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) – A former National Guard soldier who admitted traveling to Africa and boarding a truck to join the Islamic State group before ultimately bailing out was sentenced Friday to 11 years in prison.

Mohamed Jalloh, 27, of Sterling, Virginia, pleaded guilty in October to attempting to provide material support to a terrorist group. Prosecutors had sought a 20-year sentence. The defense had asked for a term of less than seven years, saying the man has renounced the Islamic State.

"I'm sorry to the court, to the people and to the U.S. military," Jalloh said Friday, WRC-TV reported.

Jalloh is one of more than 100 people in the U.S. to be charged with terror offenses connected to the Islamic State since 2014, according to George Washington University's Extremism Tracker, and one of seven from the northern Virginia area alone to be charged in the past two years.

In Jalloh's case, the charges originated from an FBI sting operation. After his arrest, though, Jalloh admitted that he had made his own contact with the group before he had ever been introduced to the FBI informant – contact the government had been unaware of at the time.

Jalloh, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Sierra Leone, had traveled back to Africa with his father in 2015. While there, he met an Islamic State recruiter. In August 2015, Jalloh traveled from Sierra to Leone to stay with the group's facilitator. He intended to travel to Libya to join the Islamic State, but the plans fell through.

Later that year, Jalloh traveled to Niger, again with the intent of joining the group. This time, he went so far as to get on a truck with other recruits to trek across the Sahara to Libya. But, in court papers, Jalloh described how he got cold feet and sneaked off the truck after 18 hours.

"Guys in the truck would whip people with a hose to pack you in," Jalloh said, describing his experience as a recruit. "This was the worst, most scary situation that I had ever been in as an adult."

Before returning to the U.S., Jalloh made contact online with an IS operative named Abu Saad Sudani, who put Jalloh in contact with a person he hoped would help Jalloh carry out an attack in the U.S. But that person turned out to be a government informant.

In conversations with the informant, Jalloh discussed carrying out a Fort Hood-style attack. He also sent hundreds of dollars to an undercover FBI employee he believed was an IS member.

Jalloh's lawyers describe his interest in the Islamic State group as a "flirtation" that stemmed from a difficult childhood in war-torn Sierra Leone that left him with little parental guidance. They say that when Jalloh met with the informant, his goal was to be set up with a Muslim woman he could marry, but the informant continually steered the conversation to violence.

In court papers, Jalloh renounces the Islamic State group.

"I feel like a complete idiot for accepting such a superficial and dishonest interpretation of Islam," Jalloh wrote in a letter to the court.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

He Said He Was Looking For A Wife. He Ended Up Trying To Aid A Terrorist Attack.

By Rachel Weiner

Washington Post, February 10, 2017

Mohamed Bailor Jalloh says he was looking to meet a Muslim wife when he reached out to an Islamic State recruiter he had met overseas. Instead, he agreed to take part in a terrorist attack on American soil.

Jalloh, a former National Guardsman, was sentenced Friday to 11 years in prison for attempting to provide support to the Islamic State. Jalloh bought a Glock handgun and an AR-15 rifle, having researched the massacre at an Orlando nightclub last year and the deadly 2009 shooting at an Army base in Fort Hood, Tex. The FBI was monitoring his movements, and he was arrested before any attack was attempted.

Defense lawyer Joseph Flood argued that Jalloh's behavior sprung not from radical fervor but from heavy drug use and untreated trauma from a childhood marked by rape, war and neglect. The "gullible" 27-year-old's attachment to the Islamist militant group was "superficial" and confused, his attorney said.

"He's clearly a follower," Flood said.

During a hearing in federal court in Alexandria, Assistant U.S. Attorney John Gibbs said he was not unsympathetic but that Jalloh's past did not justify his actions.

"Mr. Jalloh probably is and was a very troubled individual and probably was in a very bad place, but individuals in those situations often do very dangerous things," Gibbs said. "He could have stepped away; he never did that." Gibbs asked Judge Liam O'Grady to impose the maximum 20-year sentence.

Jalloh, a U.S. citizen, lived in Loudoun County at the time of his 2016 arrest.

According to court papers, he was born in Sierra Leone, the youngest of eight children. His father was polygamous, and his young mother fled to the United States when he was 2 years old. His father and stepmother soon left Sierra Leone as well, leaving him with extended family. For several years he was sexually abused by an older cousin. At age 8, the country's civil war made him a refu-gee. While running with relatives to Guinea, he saw a child shot by a soldier.

"I was hungry, starving, crying," he recalled in a court filing. In Guinea, he was bullied because of his distended abdomen.

Jalloh made it to the United States after six months and reunited with his family. But after a few years, his father left and his mother was deported. He lived with various relatives, who largely ignored him. He spent most of his time indoors, watching pornography, court papers said.

Flood said Jalloh has always had a tendency to agree to plans but fail to follow through, an assertion that was greeted with soft chuckles from family in the gallery.

Seeking direction, Jalloh joined the Army National Guard out of college.

Jalloh "seemed like he was looking for something to latch onto and barring that would wander rather aimlessly," Staff Sgt. Sherwood Rath Anderson wrote in a letter to the judge.

Vulnerable to emotional appeals, Jalloh often gave money to charities advocating for children in Africa, friends and relatives said in court filings. He was frustrated by the idea that he could not do more for Syrian refugees.

"I started to watch online videos of civilians escaping Assad, on the beach shores, and walking long distances took my memory back to when I was a child and civilian in the Sierra Leone War which incited an emotion reaction rather than a rational reaction in me," Jalloh wrote in a letter to the judge. "Unfortunately, I succumbed to the same ISIL online propaganda that is responsible for so many atrocities in the world." ISIL is another name for the Islamic State.

In 2015, Jalloh visited his father in Sierra Leone and met Islamic State recruiters who encouraged him to go to Libya and fight, according to his account. He gave them several hundred dollars, but when he actually got on a truck to Libya he quickly changed his mind and fled.

"We were packed like sardines," he recalled. "Guys in the truck would whip people with a hose to pack you in. This was the worst, most scary situation that I had ever been in as an adult."

On arriving back in the United States, Jalloh made contact online with Abu Saad Sudani, a now-deceased Islamic State member who was plotting an attack in the United States. But he claims he was looking not for a co-conspirator but for a wife. His girlfriend of six years had dumped him, sending intimate photos of herself with a new man for emphasis, Jalloh wrote in the court filing.

"I started doing marijuana, coke and mushrooms using one of them at least on a daily basis in order to kill the pain I was in," he wrote. "I cast my depression as some kind of noble inspiration. In truth, it was complete self-destruction."

A man Sudani connected Jalloh with, who he says he thought would help him find a bride, was actually an FBI informant. Flood said that the informant pushed Jalloh toward terrorism. For two months, Flood wrote, the informant "hounded" Jalloh with "nearly constant entreaties" to engage in a violent attack.

The FBI informant told Jalloh about a plot to murder U.S. military personnel and asked Jalloh about acquiring weapons. Jalloh tried to buy an assault rifle. As he did, the

FBI was watching. The gun had already been rendered inoperable.

Flood said Jalloh felt remorse for the shame he had brought on his family and the National Guard, as well as the "black mark" he cast on other refugees at a time when many have been banned from the country.

Oregon Local News – FBI, CCSO Investigate 'Eco-terrorists' At Beavercreek Farm

Portland (OR) Tribune, February 12, 2017

Bird breeders in Beavercreek lost approximately 50 pheasants valued at $1,000 when an unknown number of suspects cut a lock to open up an aviary housing the animals last month.

The Clackamas County Sheriff's Office took the initial report at about 1:07 p.m. on March 18 at Estacada Game Birds, 25395 S. Beavercreek Road.

A volunteer at the farm believed that the suspects were an eco-terrorist group who bragged about the incident online. The owner of Estacada Game Birds declined to comment for this story, and CCSO has forwarded this case to the FBI and the Oregon Humane Society.

"These birds were bred, among other reasons, to suffer and die in pre-orchestrated canned hunts; a practice which represents the height of human arrogance and disregard towards animal life," said the anonymous statement from the Animal Liberation Front. "This liberation was also done as a reminder that when we don't allow fear to prevent us from taking action to directly free animals."

CCSO Deputy Steve Funk found that sometime overnight, an unknown person(s) came upon the property and cut off the lock to the door on one of four large bird pens next to each other. The suspect(s) might have been scared off because they normally open all the pens. Not only has Estacada Game Birds been burglarized before, it is one of four similar types of businesses in Clackamas County to have been struck by the group.

Finding it "very easy" to access this property from any part of the roadway, Funk provided security suggestions for the property. Funk inspected the grounds and was unable to locate any evidence that might suggest the identity of who committed this crime.

"I did note the pens are very close to Beavercreek Road, and there is no fencing separating the property from the roadway," he wrote in the police report.

Meet The People Who Helped Quash Trump's Plans To Reinstitute Torture.

Slate, February 10, 2017

The American deep state—influential career executives in the national security community—has started to push back on President Donald Trump on a number of issues, including immigration, U.S.–Russia policy, and counterterrorism operations. One of the most important may be detention and interrogation, where career military and intelligence officials rejected a draft executive order that would have resurrected the torture regime that existed immediately after 9/11, reflecting campaign promises by President Trump to bring waterboarding (and "much worse") back into America's interrogation arsenal.

That they did so should not surprise anyone who has followed the issue over the past decade. Why Trump's draft order got such a rude welcome, however, deserves attention because it illustrates important changes since 9/11 in U.S. counterterrorism policy and practice. Career professionals in the Defense Department, the CIA, and elsewhere don't want torture because it doesn't work, corrodes their integrity, makes it harder to work with allies, and carries enormous risk for strategic blowback. The value of human intelligence has also diminished in relative terms as other American intelligence tools have improved, so there is less incentive for intelligence agencies to want torture in their kits.

This story begins with the detention and interrogation policy that President Trump's draft order sought to resurrect. Two of President Barack Obama's three orders relating to torture were to be revoked, and a George W. Bush administration order from 2007 was to be reinstated. The order directed Defense Secretary James Mattis to keep Guantanamo Bay open and use it not just for existing detainees but new ones, too. Trump's order also directed the military to review its interrogation manual to determine whether it needed more enhanced interrogation tools. And, most notably, the order asked the CIA to consider restarting its "black sites" program for retention, detention, and interrogation of terror suspects, which was shut down by President Bush in late 2006.

The order met stiff opposition from career officials within the Defense Department and the CIA from the moment it left the White House. When a draft leaked, Republican and Democratic national security leaders joined the chorus of dissent. In response, the Trump White House developed a more milquetoast order, keeping Guantanamo's prison open but jettisoning plans to revive the CIA's torture program and the military's more aggressive interrogations, too.

The career professionals in these agencies didn't push back on the original order because of any political opposition to Trump. The deep state led by these agencies' career executives, generals, and admirals transcends administrations, and even partisan politics to some extent, despite what Trump may think of their support for him. These professionals pushed back, publicly and privately, because they have learned the hard way that torture is ineffective, unwise, and strategically risky.

Defense and intelligence professionals have learned that torture simply does not work through questioning tens of

FOIA CBP 000828

thousands of detainees since 9/11. The professionals inside the CIA, FBI, Defense, and other agencies have developed an effective arsenal of lawful interrogation techniques that do work—and work particularly well when coupled with other intelligence tools, such as forensic information like fingerprints on the inside of explosive devices. As Secretary Mattis (who oversaw thousands of interrogations during his service in the Marine Corps) reportedly told President Trump, "a pack of cigarettes and a couple of beers" produces better intelligence than torture.

Relatedly, the relative value of human intelligence gained through questioning of any type has declined over the past 15 years. Such intelligence mattered greatly in the few years after 9/11, both for piecing together the parts of al-Qaida and its future plots, and understanding insurgent networks in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the U.S. intelligence community has undergone a renaissance in collection and analysis driven by massive improvements in surveillance technology, computing, big data analysis, and artificial intelligence. Other intelligence tools have also made big leaps forward, such as forensic intelligence collected from cellphones, pocket litter, and improvised explosive devices collected on the battlefield. Human intelligence still plays an important role, but not to the degree it did right after 9/11. Although significant legal questions surround current U.S. surveillance policy, intelligence officials still prefer the relatively clean intelligence produced by these tools to those gathered through detention and interrogation.

Third, it has become clear over the past 15 years that torture, or even lesser included forms of detention and interrogation policy, can be corrosive to the integrity and ethics of national security agencies. Implicit in the statements on torture by then-Gen. David Petraeus and Gen. James Mattis in the counterinsurgency manual they co-authored is a sense that torture degrades the honor of those who practice it. Discipline and integrity are paramount to being effective in war, or clandestine operations in the shadow of war. Mattis, CIA Director Mike Pompeo, Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford, and Sen. John McCain understand this better than the president and do not want an executive order that undermines the ethics of their forces or agencies.

Fourth, torture carries huge strategic risks and complications that can make it harder to fight America's wars. For 15 years, we have depended on allies to fight alongside us in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other theaters of war. Our intelligence agencies have also depended on allies and partners to share information and work together, almost always out of public view. Notwithstanding President Trump's disparagement of allies and alliances, our national security agencies continue to depend on other countries around the world. These relationships exist because our interests align, but they are strengthened by our shared values.

In the past, America's torture regime made it very difficult for our allies and partners to work with us or share intelligence with us. The career professionals in Defense, CIA and other agencies know this better than President Trump. They understand all too well that foreign are far more likely to work with the U.S. without the antagonism of torture in the mix. Two recent high-profile cases illustrate this—with cooperation flowing from Turkey, Jordan, and Italy precisely because the U.S. provided assurances it would not use Guantanamo for certain detainees, let alone enhanced interrogation, let alone torture.

Fifth, defense and intelligence leaders are reticent about a return to torture because they know they will be left to deal with the repercussions long after President Trump departs office. The Bush administration has long since left office, and so too has the Obama administration. However, the detainees at Guantanamo remain, the legacy of counterterrorism policies more than a decade old. Investigations into detention and interrogation continue as does litigation over liability for torture by the CIA at its black sites. Few, if any, leaders within the Defense Department or CIA want to be left holding the bag yet again.

In many ways, the story of torture is a parable for learning across the national security community since 9/11. In the first months and years after those devastating terror attacks, America lashed out at its enemies. We slowly, and painfully, learned to act more wisely. Our military learned to practice counterinsurgency instead of indiscriminate violence; our intelligence community built strong relationships with allies to target terrorists in the shadows before they could ever harm us. During his campaign, President Trump caricatured this learning as soft and signaled that he wanted a return to more bellicose American national security policy. This cartoonish approach won't work, and the deep state is our best hope for putting the Trump administration on a better path.

CYBER NEWS

UK Targeted By 'Dozens' Of Serious Cyber Attacks Each Month

BBC News (UK), February 12, 2017

Britain's security has been threatened by 188 high-level cyber attacks in the last three months, according to a government security chief.

Ciaran Martin, chief executive of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), told the Sunday Times many of the attacks "threatened national security".

Attempts by Russian and Chinese state-sponsored hackers were among those being investigated, he added.

Mr Martin spoke ahead of the official opening of the NCSC in London.

He told the newspaper that attempts on government departments were designed to "extract information on UK government policy on anything from energy to diplomacy to information on a particular sector".

These include alleged hacks similar to those on the US Democratic National Committee, which led to the publication of leaked emails from Hillary Clinton in the run-up to the US election.

US intelligence services have stated the attack was an attempt by the Kremlin to interfere in the presidential election.

Mr Martin said there had been "a step-change in Russian aggression in cyber space" over the last two years.

"Part of that step change has been a series of attacks on political institutions, political parties, parliamentary organisations and that's all very well evidenced by our international partners and widely accepted."

Meanwhile, Chancellor Phillip Hammond – a former defence and foreign secretary – said the NCSC had blocked 34,550 "potential attacks" on government departments and members of the public in the last six months – a rate of about 200 a day.

Writing in the Sunday Telegraph, he warned that the "internet revolution" raised the threat of being held to ransom by hackers, the theft of intellectual property and the "shutting down of critical national infrastructure".

UK Hit By 188 High-level Cyber-attacks In Three Months

The Guardian (UK), February 12, 2017

Britain is being hit by dozens of cyber-attacks a month, including attempts by Russian state-sponsored hackers to steal defence and foreign policy secrets, GCHQ's new cybersecurity chief has said.

Ciaran Martin, head of the new National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), told the Sunday Times there had been a "step change" in Russia's online aggression against the west.

His comments came as the chancellor, Philip Hammond, told the Sunday Telegraph the centre had blocked 34,550 "potential attacks" on government departments and members of the public in the past six months – about 200 cases a day.

Allegations of Russia-sponsored cyber-attacks became a focal point during the US election, raising fears that the tactic was on the rise.

Martin said Britain had been hit by 188 high-level attacks, "many of which threatened national security", in the last three months.

He told the Sunday Times: "In the case of government departments, [it is] getting into the system to extract information on UK government policy on anything from energy to diplomacy to information on a particular sector."

Attacks by Russian and Chinese state-sponsored hackers on defence and foreign policy servers are among those being investigated by the NCSC, the newspaper said.

Martin added: "Over the last two years there has been a step change in Russian aggression in cyberspace. Part of that step change has been a series of attacks on political institutions, political parties, parliamentary organisations and that's all very well evidenced by our international partners and widely accepted."

Hammond, a former defence and foreign secretary, warned that hacks could bring down national infrastructure and that even kettles, fridges and driverless cars were at risk.

Writing in the Telegraph, he warned that the "internet revolution" brought the threat of being held to ransom by hackers, the theft of intellectual property and the "shutting down of critical national infrastructure".

"Beyond hacked kettles and fridges, 'internet of things' devices, such as driverless cars, can present alarmingly real security threats that could be incredibly dangerous if the right security isn't in place," Hammond added.

Their comments come before the NCSC is officially opened in London by the Queen on Tuesday.

Russian Hackers Pose Increasing Threat To UK's National Security, GCHQ Chief Warns

GCHQ chief Ciaran Martin said over the last three months there were 188 cyber attacks against the UK of which some 'threatened national security'

By Rachel Roberts

Independent (UK), February 12, 2017

The Cold War may be over, but cyber war between Russia and the West is hotting up, according to the Government's new cyber-security chief.

Britain is increasingly being targeted by Russian state-sponsored cyber attacks, including attempts to steal top-secret national security details and to intervene in the democratic process, claims Ciaran Martin, who heads up GCHQ's new National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

Mr Martin made his comments in an interview with The Sunday Times, warning that Britain is being hit by 60 "significant" cyber-attacks each month, some of which attempt to undermine the democratic process as well as national security.

Concern has been growing about the amount of so-called fake news coming from Russian media outlets which is seen as being a concerted disinformation campaign by the Kremlin to disrupt world politics, including in the UK.

An attempt to disrupt the 2015 general election was thwarted by GCHQ in a cyber attack the security service said was the first of its kind.

US intelligence services have accused the Russian state of intervening in the Presidential election after Russian-

sponsored hackers are believed to have targeted the Democrat headquarters and accessed thousands of emails.

"We've got some very capable adversaries, but we've done a good job in detecting and managing those sorts of attacks," Mr Martin said.

"However, the level of sophistication is such that we keep very vigilant and I expect that there will be a category 1 incident at some point in the future."

And he claimed that as well as trying to uncover sensitive Government information, Russian and Chinese-sponsored hackers were going for "soft targets" including charities and local councils for personal data and universities for potentially lucrative research.

Mr Martin revealed that over the past three months, there have been 188 category 2 and 3 cyber-attacks made against the UK Government in the last three months, many of which he said "threatened national security".

He said these attacks generally involved "hundreds of thousands" of smaller attacks, such as phishing emails to Government departments and businesses.

"In the case of Government departments, [it is] getting into the system to extract information on UK Government policy on anything from energy to diplomacy to information on a particular sector.

"With companies, it could be to steal intellectual property and sometimes you would get states in that business," he said.

But he said he remains optimistic that despite a "step change" in the activities of hackers, the war against cyber crime can eventually be won.

"We can't eliminate the threat, but defeatism drives me mad.

"We shouldn't be defeatist about this — there's plenty we can do to strengthen defences at all levels.

"I want them to see the UK as the hardest target (and they do) . . . and I want anyone who is hacking the UK to see us as the hardest target."

His comments come in the same week as it was announced British schoolchildren are to be offered modules in cyber security as part of the war against hacking.

Cyber Security Lessons Offered To Schools In England

By Tom Symonds

BBC News (UK), February 11, 2017

Schoolchildren in England will be offered lessons in cyber security in a bid to find the experts of the future to defend the UK from attacks.

It is hoped 5,700 pupils aged 14 and over will spend up to four hours a week on the subject in a five-year pilot.

Classroom and online teaching, "real-world challenges" and work experience will be made available from September.

A Commons committee last week warned that a skills shortage was undermining confidence in the UK's cyber defences.

The risk that criminals or foreign powers might hack into critical UK computer systems is now ranked as one of the top four threats to national security.

'Cutting-edge skills'

Russia in particular is suspected of planning sustained attacks on Western targets.

Cyber security is a fast-growing industry, employing 58,000 experts, the government says, but the Public Accounts Committee has warned it is proving difficult to recruit people with the right skills.

UK's cyber security defences questioned

Russian hacks 'aim to destabilise the West'

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is providing £20m for the lessons, which will be designed to fit around pupils' current courses and exams.

Digital and Culture Minister Matt Hancock said: "This forward-thinking programme will see thousands of the best and brightest young minds given the opportunity to learn cutting-edge cyber security skills alongside their secondary school studies. 'Pipeline of talent'

"We are determined to prepare Britain for the challenges it faces now and in the future and these extra-curricular clubs will help identify and inspire future talent."

The government is already providing university funding and work placements for promising students.

An apprenticeship scheme has also begun to support key employers to train and recruit young people aged 16 or over who have a "natural flair for problem-solving" and are "passionate about technology".

Steve Elder, 20, who is a cyber security apprentice with BT, told BBC Radio 5 Live that educating young people about the risks and vulnerabilities of the cyber security world would help the UK prepare for the future.

He added: "Getting young people involved and getting them taught from a young age will allow them – even in their home environment – to protect themselves, before it has to come to people at a specialist level."

Mr Hancock told the BBC he wanted to ensure the UK "had the pipeline of talent" it would need.

Cyber security expert Brian Lord, a former deputy director at GCHQ, told BBC Breakfast that the scheme was an "essential initiative" to recruit more people into the profession.

He added: "There is perception that cyber security is all about techno geeks who have long hair, glasses, wear heavy metal t-shirts and drink red bull.

"There are those, and they do an extraordinarily good job. But there is a whole range of other activities... that can appeal to a wide cross section of children, graduates and

apprentices, and at the moment they don't know what [is on] offer.

"The more exposure [children] can get [the more it will] prepare them for a future career and, as that generation needs to understand how to be safe online, you get a double benefit."

British Teenagers To Be Taught 'Cyber Curriculum' To Defend UK Against Threat Of Hacking Attacks

Isis-inspired hackers contributing to rising threat amid warnings over Russia and China

By Lizzie Dearden

Independent (UK), February 11, 2017

Thousands of British teenagers are to be given training in cyber security to boost the UK's defences against the rising threat of online attacks.

The new Cyber Schools Programme aims to teach pupils some of the skills they would need to help defend Britain's businesses and institutions against online threats.

Allegations of Russian interference in the US elections and continued "cyber warfare" and espionage from China have sparked fresh fears over the threat posed by hacking.

Isis and other terrorist groups have also invested in their own cyber branches, while Islamist hacking groups such as one that recently attacked a series of NHS websites have sprung up around the world.

The Government is now aiming to guard against a future skills shortage amid mounting concern over the damage hackers or terrorists could inflict on the economy and infrastructure.

Ministers are making up to £20m available for extracurricular sessions that will see expert instructors drafted in to teach, test and train selected teenagers.

A "cyber curriculum" will be drawn up to mix classroom and online teaching with real-world challenges and hands-on work experience.

The scheme, led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), is aimed at those aged between 14 and 18, with a target for at least 5,700 teenagers to be trained by 2021.

Matt Hancock, the digital and culture minister, said: "This forward-thinking programme will see thousands of the best and brightest young minds given the opportunity to learn cutting-edge cyber security skills alongside their secondary school studies.

"We are determined to prepare Britain for the challenges it faces now and in the future and these extracurricular clubs will help identify and inspire future talent."

Participants will be expected to commit to four hours a week, with flexibility around exams and busier study periods, starting at 14 to complete a four-year course.

Older teenagers will be able to join at any point providing they meet the right criteria for the programme, which is being opened up for private bids ahead of a pilot launch in September.

The announcement came days after The Independent revealed that Islamist hackers linked to Isis carried out an attack on a series of NHS websites, exposing serious flaws in security systems meant to protect sensitive information.

Graphic images of violence from the Syrian war were put up on the sites by a group called the Tunisian Fallaga Team, which declared it was carrying out the electronic raid in retaliation to the West's aggression in the Middle East.

It is believed that patient data was vulnerable in the attacks, but initial checks do not indicate that any had been compromised.

The Tunisian group, as well as others including the Global Islamic Caliphate and Team System DZ, all connected to Isis, are said to carry out coordinated operations.

As well as airlines and media companies, the groups had broken into the US Central Command's Twitter and YouTube accounts and had published personal details of retired US military personnel.

Isis' Syria-based hacking efforts were thought to be led by Junaid Hussain, a British-Pakistani militant who was previously jailed for infiltrating Tony Blair's accounts and posting personal information online.

The 21-year-old was killed alongside two other Isis fighters in an American drone strike that hit his car in Raqqa in August 2015.

MPs have warned that confidence in the Government's ability to protect Britain from high-level online attacks is being undermined by skills shortages.

The Public Accounts Committee warned last week the threat of electronic data loss from cyber crime, espionage and accidental disclosure has risen considerably in recent years.

GCHQ dealt with 200 national security incidents a month in 2015 – double the number it was handling in the previous year – and the number is expected to rise.

It has been scouting for new talent, with teenage girls invited to join a competition last month.

The National Cyber Security Centre was launched last year with a £1.9bn investment to counter the threats.

Cyberattacks On International Banks Show Links To Hackers Who Hit Sony

Hacks began late last year, installing unauthorized code on websites belonging to financial regulators

By Robert McMillan

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Microsoft To Rate Corporate Cybersecurity

Hartford Financial says it will use the Office 365 Secure Score when setting cyberinsurance rates

By Jay Greene

Wall Street Journal, February 10, 2017

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

Manatee County Schools Faces Data Breach Affecting Thousands

South Florida Sun Sentinel, February 12, 2017

Authorities say as many as 7,700 Manatee County school employees are at risk of being victims of a data breach.

School officials learned earlier this month that two payroll employees of the school district along Florida's Gulf Coast had fallen for an email phishing scam.

The Bradenton Herald (http://bit.ly/2kFLFKP) reports that a hacker posing as Superintendent Diana Greene sent an email to one of the employees, requesting all W-2 forms for district employees.

The district has notified employees about the breach and purchased identity protection and credit monitoring for all employees.

The district has cyber-security insurance, which covers any lawsuits stemming from the attack

Hacking Increase Sparks More Cyber Security Programs

By Megan Raposa

Washington Times, February 12, 2017

Cyber security is a lot like the common cold.

There's no cure for either, but there are ways to combat both.

"Security is all about layers," said Sam Coome, a 23-year-old Dakota State University graduate student.

At a time when Russian hackers, WikiLeaks and threats of cyber warfare make national headlines daily, those layers of security are critical.

And the nation's next line of defense against cyberattacks could include Coome and his classmates on this small-town campus about an hour northwest of Sioux Falls.

The Argus Leader (http://argusne.ws/2kTSI3v) reports that enrollment in DSU's cyber security program has more than doubled in the last five years while other South Dakota colleges struggled to maintain numbers.

The national headlines piquing even more interest and giving students a greater sense of purpose in their studies.

"The wheels in their heads are turning," Pauli said. "And (they're) saying, 'Geez, I could find myself in the middle of one of these situations in the not too distant future.'"

DSU students learn how to think like hackers in an environment not found in many schools nationwide, which in turn teaches them to keep hackers out.

It's a skill that's seen increasing demand from not only government agencies like the National Security Agency, but also from businesses of all sizes in all industries.

"I think almost everyone here recognizes the importance of what we're learning," said Joshua Klosterman, who will graduate from DSU this spring with a network security and administration degree.

DSU wasn't always the regional hub for all things cyber security. The school started in 1881 as a teacher's college.

About a century later, the university found itself struggling to differentiate from other teacher colleges in the state. The legislature had attempted to close the college, and enrollment was dropping.

Then-Gov. Bill Janklow recognized DSU's struggles, and he also saw that technology was the way of the future as companies like Citibank moved to the region.

Janklow worked with the Board of Regents to change the mission of DSU, and in 1984, state legislators gave DSU the mission of specializing in computer-related programs.

Today, DSU one of four universities in the nation with a regional resource center through the NSA. It was also the first college to ever have an articulation agreement with the NSA, and its cyber operations major is designated among only about a dozen in the country as a Center of Academic Excellence.

DSU students go on to work for the National Security Agency, Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab and Navy SPAWAR (Space and Naval Warfare System Command).

"There's a lot of job security here," said Andrew Kramer, a 26-year-old DSU graduate student.

Josh Pauli, who has taught cyber operations for the last decade and spent 13 years total as a DSU professor, often jokingly shares the same observation.

"DSU is better known in Baltimore and in Washington D.C. than in South Dakota," Pauli said.

The two programs at the heart of DSU's rise into the world of cyber security are cyber operations, and network security and administration.

It's rare to find programs like these in the nation, much less the region, Pauli said, especially for undergraduates.

"There's probably only five or six programs in the nation that are designated by the NSA in Cyber Operations," Pauli said.

Students practice both offensive and defensive security. They work in a "hacking lab" to learn how hackers think, which helps them learn how to defend against attacks.

Some students even get a security clearance allowing them to work directly with the NSA through internships, meaning they're seeing firsthand responses to news like Russian hacks.

"They would be right there in the thick of things," Pauli said.

DSU is also working to create a secure facility on campus that would allow student collaboration with the NSA to take place closer to home, Pauli said. That facility would need the go-ahead from the NSA and the Department of Defense before moving forward.

Not all DSU students aspire to federal government jobs. Kramer, who's in the second year of his Masters of Science in Applied Computer Science, plans to stay in South Dakota as a teacher.

Kramer knew he had a future in cyber security long before hacking was making headlines.

The northern California native started learning to program at age 11, and at age 15 he had hacked into the website of a local internet service provider.

Not wanting to cause any trouble, Kramer brought his findings to the company, saying he'd found a weakness in their website. He was worried he'd be facing charges, but instead, the company thanked him.

"I quickly realized it was something that I could turn into a career," he said.

Kramer said it's a common misconception that people treat computer hacking like "magic."

"It may appear very technically advanced … but at its core it's just understanding the rules that a system follows and working around them in ways that aren't expected," Kramer said.

That kind of problem solving is exactly what keeps Dylan Johnson, a senior cyber operations major, engaged in cyber security.

Johnson's reaction to hacking headlines is one of both intrigue and inspiration. He and his friends often have discussions on the ethics of international cyberattacks and what it might look like if international laws pertaining to cyber security were ever implemented.

To catch the "bad guys" in cyberattacks, one has to understand how they operate, Kramer said.

And while the hundreds of DSU students in cyber security are learning to operate like the bad guys, they're ultimate goal is to help the good guys stay safe.

"I really want to make sure," Klosterman said. "Wherever I'm working, I can effect as much good change in the world as possible."

Catching Up With Sen. Mike Rounds, New Cyber Subpanel Chairman

Politico, February 10, 2017

Sen. Mike Rounds is the newly appointed chairman of a freshly created Armed Services cybersecurity-focused subcommittee. His immediate priority? Figuring out the state of play, he told Tim in an interview. "The first part is a current assessment of where we are today," he said, which means asking the Defense Department "where they see the lack of any policy that needs to be developed, where they see the need for either manpower or additional resources, and then have us go back through and dot the I's and cross the T's and agree or disagree with the recommendations." It also means assessing where the United States stands in its capabilities compared with "both bad actors and peer competitors," Rounds said.

The South Dakota Republican said he isn't most worried about any single threat, or any single country. "If there's anything, it's what I don't know about," Rounds said. "Where are they, and what capability do they have that we don't know about?" But Rounds doesn't have an easy answer for trying to identify the blind spots. "You do your due diligence," Rounds said. "You allow folks that are smarter than us to figure it out with the resources they need." Pros can read a full Q&A with Rounds next week.

HAPPY FRIDAY and welcome to Morning Cybersecurity! Your MC host is stumbling across this cyber bullying meme more frequently of late. Sorta on topic, I guess. Send your thoughts, feedback and especially tips to tstarks@politico.com, and be sure to follow @timstarks, @POLITICOPro and @MorningCybersec. Full team info is below.

MAYBE? FINALLY? — There's a chance the long-awaited cybersecurity executive order finally arrives today, but it's increasingly likely the document will get kicked to next week, according to several people tracking the process. A recent draft has been publicly circulating since earlier this week, but the administration is still toying with numerous potential tweaks, according to multiple people with knowledge of the order's development. That means there are other drafts under consideration that may emerge.

The sense right now among some in the business community is that the document is moving in the right direction but still has flaws. Multiple people told MC they hoped to see some language changed before the document gets President Donald Trump's signature.

TOO SOON — Sen. Ben Cardin, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, made his case Thursday for two Russia bills: one meant to strengthen sanctions on Russia and another to make it harder for the White House to offer sanctions relief. "It's not just the attack on our country, on our free election," Cardin said, citing a litany of Russian offenses. "It's also what they might do in Western Europe." But Chairman Bob Corker said it's too soon, since Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has just taken office. "Having spent some time with Tillerson understanding

the route he's planning to take to ratchet back what Russia is doing, I want to spend a little time making sure that what we do to strengthen his hand is appropriate," Corker said.

The pair did agree that Trump's recent comments about Russian President Vladimir Putin, where Trump appeared to place Russia and the U.S. on similar moral standing, were wrong. "There is no equivalency whatsoever," Cardin said. "I see no moral equivalence, none, between ourselves and actions Russia has taken," Corker said.

GOP SENATORS WANT 'FIRM RESPONSE' TO RUSSIA — Republican senators want Trump to set aside his admiration for Putin and take the Kremlin's global aggression seriously. "We must recognize and counter the active cyber and information warfare Russia is conducting against the United States and Western democracies, including attempted interference in our democratic elections process," wrote Sens. John Cornyn, Susan Collins, Joni Ernst, Cory Gardner, Jim Inhofe, Rob Portman, Mike Rounds and Todd Young in a letter to Trump on Thursday. The senators urged Trump to devise "a firm response" to malicious cyber activity and said it should include "diplomatic actions, economic consequences, as well as a strengthened military posture in Europe." Cornyn is the No. 2 Senate Republican, Rounds is the chairman of the new Senate Armed Services Cybersecurity Subcommittee and Gardner chairs the Senate Foreign Relations international cyber policy subcommittee.

WAR OF WORDS ON SCIENCE PANEL — The House Science Committee's chairman is pushing back against what he calls the "bold hypocrisy" of a letter from senior committee Democrats asking for a hearing on White House cyber practices. The letter mentioned three areas of concern, including Trump's apparent continued use of an insecure Android phone. And it pointedly noted the committee had previously probed federal cyber practices — including Hillary Clinton's private email server. But Chairman Lamar Smith didn't appreciate the letter's implication that he might waver from his oversight role now that a Republican is president.

"Just months ago, the ranking member [Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson], said that she was 'outraged that the chairman is recklessly abusing the committee's investigatory powers' and that she believed that the committee 'desperately needs to get back to the work of ensuring continued American leadership in science and innovation and the legitimate oversight of our research and development enterprise,'" Smith said in a statement provided to MC. "Despite the bold hypocrisy evidenced in the ranking member's letter, the committee intends to ensure strong cybersecurity protocols are implemented across the federal government."

Asked if Smith's statement meant that he would specifically investigate the White House practices outlined in the letter, a spokesman responded, "The committee will continue to monitor cyber issues across the government as they arise."

DID THE WHITE HOUSE FIRE ITS CISO? — The Trump White House may have recently lost its chief information security officer. ZDNet reported Thursday that Cory Louie, who has coordinated the digital protection of all White House IT assets since August 2015, was either fired or forced to resign last week. "He was escorted out from his office in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building across the street from the West Wing," according to the publication. One source said Louie's departure was part of a "witch hunt" targeting appointees of former President Barack Obama. Neither Louie nor the White House responded to MC's requests for comment. The White House CISO is different from the recently created post of federal CISO, which has a broader, policy-oriented portfolio. Greg Touhill, the first federal CISO, left at the end of the Obama administration.

HOT BEEF AND DATA BREACH — Arby's on Thursday acknowledged a data breach that quickly became the latest volley in a long-running industry feud over data breach notification standards. Industry groups and both parties in Congress have long agreed companies need one federal rule on when they must notify customers following a cyber intrusion. Companies currently deal with a confusing, costly and time-consuming patchwork of 47 state laws. But retailers and financial firms have been at loggerheads over the details of the bill. Retailers are wary of Congress foisting too many banking security rules on them, but financial firms say it's unfair that they're currently held to a higher standard for security.

On Thursday, the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions pounced on the Arby's news, first reported by the cybersecurity blog KrebsOnSecurity. "The continuing saga of retail data breaches have become a national nightmare," said Dan Berger, CEO of NAFCU. "The lack of a national standard of protection for merchants makes it easier for them." Berger argued that "Congress must act to implement national data security standards for retailers now." Capitol Hill is unlikely to address the issue this year, though.

ADVICE FROM A CYBER ALLY — The former president of Estonia, a tiny Eastern European country that has become a nexus for cybersecurity work, isn't worried about the effect that Trump will have on U.S. cyber innovation. "It's such a big threat to the security of the United States that the United States, regardless of who is president, will have the best and the brightest," Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who led Estonia from 2006 to 2016, told MC at a Wednesday night event celebrating the launch of the Tallinn Manual 2.0. The document, named for the capital of Estonia, presents expert opinions on the applicability of international law to cyberspace.

"The threats are real to security, with farther-reaching effects than anything you can ascribe to terrorism," Ilves said.

FOIA CBP 000835

"You can really take down the United States with a well-done cyberattack." Ilves has some experience with the subject. In 2007, six months into his presidency, Russian hackers launched massive distributed denial-of-service attacks against a wide array of Estonian targets and nearly brought the digitally dependent country to a halt. The experience validated Estonia's previous warnings about the need for international cyber cooperation. In 2008, experts set up a NATO-accredited cyber defense center in Tallinn.

"Given that the president's responsibility is the security of the nation," Ilves told MC, "the best and the brightest will be involved [in] guaranteeing the security of digitally based infrastructure in the U.S. It's too important a mission."

TWEET OF THE DAY — Someone needs to read more D.C. media!

QUICK BYTES

— "President Donald Trump is unlikely to withdraw the United States from international efforts to achieve stability in cyberspace, the head of a NATO-backed cyber program told POLITICO."

— "A federal judge currently in the spotlight for blocking President Donald Trump's travel ban executive order is now questioning the constitutionality of secrecy orders that accompany government surveillance demands." POLITICO.

— Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn did talk sanctions with Russia before the president took office, current and former officials say, despite prior denials. The Washington Post.

— The Army is now looking at direct commissions for civilian cyber experts. Stars and Stripes.

— Stratfor tries to make sense of the Russian cyber arrests.

— Denmark is also worried about Russia's hacking capabilities. The Associated Press.

— The Marine Corps wants a 12,000 force increase, driven in part by cyber posts. Military.com.

— Accenture made another cybersecurity acquisition. Washington Technology.

— Many see Tom Bossert as the cyber voice of reason in the Trump White House. Wired.

— An American child apparently confessed to a cyberattack on the Brussels airport after last spring's suicide bombings. Independent.

— ISIL supporters fear malware targeting them via the Telegram messaging app. CyberScoop.

— The Center for Long-Term Cybersecurity announced 2017 research grants.

That's all for today. You stinky LOBBO.

Stay in touch with the whole team: Cory Bennett (cbennett@politico.com, @Cory_Bennett); Bryan Bender (bbender@politico.com, @BryanDBender); Eric Geller (egeller@politico.com, @ericgeller); Martin Matishak (mmatishak@politico.com, @martinmatishak) and Tim Starks (tstarks@politico.com, @timstarks).

Homeland Security To Unveil 12 New Tools At Cyber Conference

NextGov, February 10, 2017

The Homeland Security Department's science and technology division will be showing off a dozen new cyber tools developed with DHS funds at next week's RSA cybersecurity conference in San Francisco.

The tools range from helping organizations join forces against malware attacks to offering secure connections to Bluetooth devices.

The division described the tools as "mature cybersecurity technology solutions ready for pilot deployment and commercialization."

Here's a rundown, provided by DHS:

AS-Rank: A tool that ranks autonomous systems and organizations in support of internet security, stability, situational awareness and resilience.

CHARIOT: A tool that filters open-source social media to eliminate topics irrelevant to cybersecurity analysts.

CodeDNA: A scalable, shareable technology that facilitates community-based defense against malware attacks.

DDNR: A set of machine-learning algorithms designed to detect system patterns that deviate from normal operation and to respond appropriately.

ImmuneSoft: A hybrid static and runtime approach to detecting and healing vulnerabilities in embedded systems.

Internet Atlas: A geographic representation of the physical internet, including nodes, conduits/links and relevant metadata.

QUASAR: A threat intelligence and decision support platform that provides cyber defense planners visualization and quantitative analytics to determine the security impact of deploying defenses.

REDUCE: A toolset that allows cybersecurity analysts to rapidly discover relationships between malware samples, extract temporal threat intelligence and develop actionable signatures for known and emerging threats.

REnigma: A tool that reverse-engineers malware.

SilentAlarm: An inference-based technology for detecting abnormal network traffic that depends on dynamic network behavior knowledge.

Virtual Mobile Infrastructure: A secure platform that provides no data at rest on mobile devices, enabling secure access from any device to applications and enterprise data running in a data center or cloud environment.

ZeroPoint: A platform that provides highly effective, high-throughput, next-generation detection and diagnostics of

exploit payloads embedded in documents distributed via email and the web.

House Homeland Security Committee Plans Cyber Hearing Next Month

By Morgan Chalfant

The Hill, February 10, 2017

The House Homeland Security Committee is planning a hearing on cybersecurity threats early next month, The Hill has learned.

The committee is expected to hold a full hearing on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) cyber defenses and threats to the U.S. on March 1, according to a committee aide.

The hearing will be the committee's first focusing on cybersecurity since the intelligence community concluded that Russia engaged in a cyber and disinformation campaign aimed at influencing the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

The hearing will not focus on the Russian election hacks but will instead cover the full scope of the threat landscape, touching on cyber threats from Russia, China, North Korea and other hostile actors, the aide said.

Hackers tied to North Korea's government made waves with the breach of Sony Pictures' computer systems in 2014, in retaliation for the Hollywood studio's production of the movie "The Interview," which mocked leader Kim Jong Un. The massive Office of Personnel Management hack detected in 2015, in which more than 20 million people had their personal data stolen, has been traced to hackers in China.

In March, committee members will receive expert testimony on the DHS's civilian cyber defenses, the aide said.

Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas) has made cyber a top priority, pushing for reforms and reorganization at the DHS in order to boost the department's ability to protect the nation and its critical infrastructure from cyber intrusions.

Lawmakers have been increasingly eager to get input on U.S. cyber weaknesses and threats, especially in the wake of the breaches of computer systems used by the Democratic National Committee and former Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta during last year's presidential campaign.

Various Senate committees have held hearings on the breaches traced to Russia. The Senate Armed Services Committee has also formed a new subcommittee to oversee the Pentagon's cyber capabilities.

While President Trump has talked about making changes on cybersecurity policy, he has yet to sign a cyber executive order that was pulled last week without explanation.

Russia Suspected Over Hacking Attack On Italian Foreign Ministry

The Guardian (UK), February 10, 2017

Russia is suspected by Italian officials of being behind a sustained hacking attack against the Italian foreign ministry last year that compromised email communications and lasted for many months before it was detected, according to people familiar with the matter.

An Italian government official confirmed that the attack took place last spring and lasted for more than four months but did not infiltrate an encrypted system used for classified communications.

Paolo Gentiloni, the Italian prime minister who was serving as foreign minister at the time, was not affected by the hack, according to the official, who said Gentiloni avoided using email while he was foreign minister.

The foreign ministry's "field offices", including embassies and staff members who report back to Rome about meetings with foreign officials, were affected by the malware attack. But the government official said sensitive information had not been compromised because it would also have been encrypted.

The official did not confirm that Moscow was behind the attack. But two other people with knowledge of the attack said the Russian state was believed to have been behind it. The hacking is now the subject of an inquiry by the chief prosecutor in Rome.

"There were no attacks on the encrypted level. So the information – delicate, sensitive information – that is usually shared in this net, which is restricted by code, has never been attacked or part of this attack," the government official said.

The person said that after the attack was discovered, the foreign ministry modified its online "architecture" and introduced new instruments to enhance internal security. The official declined to comment on how the intrusion was detected.

The revelation comes amid heightened concerns that Russia has targeted Nato members, including the US, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Bulgaria, as part of a cyber campaign that seeks to weaken the governments of those countries and disrupt critical infrastructure.

In the US, intelligence agencies have blamed Russian government-sponsored hacking groups for breaching the Democratic National Committee and officials in Hillary Clinton's campaign during the 2016 presidential elections, in part to try to help Donald Trump win the White House.

People who discussed the matter with the Guardian on condition of anonymity said they believed the attack against the foreign ministry was an attempt to gain insight into decision-making within the Italian government.

If Russia did attack Italy, it was targeting a country generally considered less hostile to it than other EU countries such as Germany or the UK. While Italy has supported sanctions against Russia that were imposed following the annexation of Crimea, the government under former prime

minister Matteo Renzi strongly opposed a proposal to levy new sanctions against Moscow for its role in the Syrian conflict.

News of the hacking could stoke concerns that Russia may seek to influence the next Italian election, which could be called as early as June. In an interview with the Guardian late last year, a foreign diplomat in Rome questioned whether the current centre-left government, which will face a tough re-election challenge, had prepared itself for possible interference by Russia.

The government's main opposition, the anti-establishment Five Star Movement, has adopted pro-Russian positions on topics ranging from Vladimir Putin's military intervention in Syria, to his invasion of Ukraine, to a call for Italy to lift sanctions against Russia and reassess its commitment to Nato.

A representative of the Russian government was quoted by Ansa, the Italian news agency, as saying the allegations were unproven."There are no facts that prove this statement," Maria Zakharova, a spokesperson for the Russian foreign ministry, said in a WhatsApp message in response to a question about the veracity of the hacking allegation.

Raffaele Marchetti, a political scientist and cybersecurity expert at LUISS University in Rome, said Italy had stepped up its attention to security recently and that he had been encouraged by the appointment of Marco Minniti as interior minister because of Minniti's expertise on the cyber issue.

"But of course much more needs to be done and implemented," Marchetti said.

Italy's vulnerability to cyber-attacks was exposed earlier this year following the arrest of a brother-sister hacking duo who were accused of trying to illegally gain access to the email accounts of Renzi when he was prime minister, as well as several other prominent Italian politicians and business executives.

Giulio Occhionero and his sister Francesca Maria, who was born in the US and is an American citizen, maintained servers in the US that were seized by the FBI as part of the investigation.

The servers are due to be sent to Italy and officials have said the extent of the pair's alleged crimes will only be known once the servers are examined. While they are not believed to have gained access to Renzi's email account, there is deep suspicion within the security community in Italy that the two were likely working with or on behalf of other foreign or domestic interests.

The two are still being held in jail. Their lawyers have denied the siblings committed any wrongdoing.

Foreign Hacker Gets 8 Years In $55M US Scam Case

Philly (PA), February 10, 2017

A prolific foreign hacker behind sophisticated cyberattacks that netted an estimated $55 million was sentenced Friday to eight years in prison in rare win for law enforcement officials who have identified, but failed to arrest, hundreds of others like him.

Prosecutors in federal court in Brooklyn had sought up to 14 years behind bars for Ercan Findikoglu, a Russian-speaking Turkish national so skilled with computers that he tracked the sprawling international heist in real-time to make sure a small army of thieves wouldn't cheat him out of his share of the proceeds.

U.S. District Judge Kiyo Matsumoto opted for the lesser sentence after noting that Findikoglu could serve another 19 years in Turkey for an unrelated cyber theft.

"I could have used my skills for something good," Findikoglu said before hearing his sentence. "Instead, I wasted them. ... I only have myself to blame."

He also wiped away tears while describing his anguish over being separated from his Russian wife and 5-year-old in Turkey, where they've have been denied U.S visas needed to visit him.

"It is tragic that he has not and will not see his son," the judge said.

Before his capture by the U.S. Secret Service, Findikoglu had gone to great lengths to obscure his cyber fingerprints and stay out of the reach of American law, according to court papers.

It wasn't until Findikoglu made an ill-advised trip to Germany in December 2013 that he was arrested at the request of U.S. authorities. After losing a court challenge, he was eventually extradited.

Foreign hackers "know their safe havens and some are more challenging to get to," said Robert Sica, who retired last year as the special agent in charge of the Secret Service's New York field office. "Inevitably they make a mistake."

According to prosecutors, Findikoglu masterminded three complex financial crimes by hacking into different credit card processors, eliminating the limits on prepaid cards and then texting access codes to crews of so-called "cashers" who within hours withdrew thousands of dollars from ATMs.

In one December 2012 hack, they say, 5,000 cashers in 20 countries withdrew a total of $5 million – including $400,000 in 700 transactions from 140 New York ATMs – in less than three hours, according to court papers.

A percentage of the stolen cash was then kicked back to Findikoglu via wire transfers and deliveries to co-conspirators in Turkey, Romania and Ukraine, prosecutors charge.

The Secret Service investigates financial crimes committed by international hackers. The FBI goes after state-sponsored hackers in counter-intelligence cases and has faced similar difficulties putting foreigners behind bars.

In 2014, U.S. authorities indicted five members of the Chinese military on hacking charges, though experts say it's unlikely they'll ever be extradited to the U.S.

Russian hacker Evgeniy Mikhailovich Bogachev is on the FBI's most-wanted list, has a $3 million bounty on his head and is believed to be living freely in Russia.

Regis Cybersecurity Exercise Shows Trainees What A "malicious Attack" Can Do

Denver Post, February 12, 2017

The red team found a way into the network through a computer running Windows XP and took the dam down.

Had it been a cyberattack on a real dam, it would have been a catastrophe. Instead, it was a part of a training exercise conducted by Regis University, the state, and the Colorado Army and Air Force National Guard.

Those attending the two-day weekend exercise learned "what a malicious actor may be doing to your network," said Laura Cobert, chief warrant officer in the Guard's cyber protection team.

The exercises, which began four years ago, are conducted twice yearly.

This particular exercise was based on a real cyberattack against a small dam in upstate New York that was conducted by Iran, said Jeremy Lammon, master sergeant in the Air National Guard. Although the 2013 attack showed Iran was capable of hacking into the dam, there was no serious damage. "It just showed that it could be done."

No one realized the attack had happened until last year, Lammon said. On many cyberattacks, it takes an average of 350 days before it comes to the victim's attention, "and usually you find out when somebody says, "Hey, by the way, I found your data online."

Besides the Guard, representatives of the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, several water departments, private businesses and five states attended.

The exercises offer a chance to get those responsible for protecting cyber infrastructure together, so they can build relationships, said Daniel Massey, program manager in the Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity division.

"When something goes wrong, that is the wrong time to exchange business cards," said Daniel Likarish, director of Regis' Center on Information Assurance Studies.

"This helps build a community of interest and practice. And if there is an event, there is trust already established," Likarish said.

Cyber warriors look for weaknesses in systems linked to larger networks. Some small local governments have small one- or two-person information technology shops, but they can provide access to state networks or other large systems. "It's a back-door strategy. An attack isn't going to be at the front gate. We find a machine that wasn't properly secured."

Democrats Call For Probe Into White House's Cybersecurity Practices

FedScoop, February 10, 2017

Democratic members of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology are calling for a probe into the White House's cybersecurity practices, according to a letter.

Reps. Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Texas, Dan Lipinski, D-Ill., and Don Beyer, D-Va., signed and sent a letter to the committee's Republican leadership requesting a hearing on the matter.

"The current administration, in its short time in office, has shown a shocking disregard for cybersecurity practices," reads the letter

to to Lamar Smith, R-Texas., Darin LaHood, R-Ill., and Barbara Comstock, R-Va.

"Given your previous investigations of cybersecurity practices at multiple federal agencies, including the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and Federal Reserve Board, and with respect to former Secretary Clinton's private email server, we trust you will be equally concerned with any and all careless cybersecurity practices of the Trump Administration."

Johnson, Lipinski and Beyer take issue with President Donald Trump's reported use of an

insecure, outdated Android smartphone and also questioned the security measures which were previously in place to protect

the administration's various Twitter accounts, including the @POTUS and @realDonaldTrump handle.

Government Twitter accounts are often used to announce official news and policies. Tweets from Trump's personal account have in the past affected public stock prices and defined the news cycle.

Active email accounts belonging to top Trump aides, including spokesman Sean Spicer and Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, were recently linked back to an old, reportedly compromised Republican National Committee email

system.

FBI Director James Comey previously said that

Russian intelligence services had hacked into defunct RNC email servers. It remains unclear whether any Trump aide uses their old RNC email account.

State-sponsored Hackers Targeting Prominent Journalists, Google Warns

By By Daniel Lippman

Politico, February 10, 2017

Google has warned a number of prominent journalists that state-sponsored hackers are attempting to steal their passwords and break into their inboxes, the journalists tell POLITICO.

Jonathan Chait of New York Magazine said he received several messages from Google warning him about an attack from a government-backed hacker starting shortly after the election. He said the most recent warning came two to three weeks ago.

Julia Ioffe, who recently started at The Atlantic and has covered Russia for years, said she got warnings as recently as two weeks ago. (See one of the warnings: http://bit.ly/2kMUyRb)

Some journalists getting the warnings say they suspect the hackers could be Russians looking to find incriminating emails they could leak to embarrass journalists, either by revealing alleged liberal bias or to expose the sausage-making of D.C. journalism.

"The fact that all this started right after the election suggests to me that journalists are the next wave to be targeted by state-sponsored hackers in the way that Democrats were during it," said one journalist who got the warning. "I worry that the outcome is going to be the same: Someone, somewhere, is going to get hacked, and then the contents of their gmail will be weaponized against them — and by extension all media."

The Russian embassy did not respond to a request for comment.

Google cautioned that the warnings did not mean the accounts had been compromised already and were sent due to "an abundance of caution."

"Since 2012, we've notified users when we believe their Google accounts are being targeted by government-backed attackers," said a Google spokesperson in a statement. "We send these warnings out of an abundance of caution — they do not indicate that a user's account has already been compromised or that a more widespread attack is occurring when they receive the notice."

Ezra Klein, the founder of Vox, said he had received the warning as recently as a few days back. CNN senior media reporter Brian Stelter said he has been getting the alerts for the past few months.

Other journalists who confirmed they've recently gotten the warnings include New York Times national security correspondent David Sanger, Times columnist Paul Krugman and Yahoo Washington bureau chief Garance Franke-Ruta.

GQ special contributor Keith Olbermann said the warnings started a few weeks after the election, and he received the most recent alert earlier this week, a "big bright red bar" across the top of his Gmail. Some of the reporters say they are tightening up their email security to try to prevent the hackers from getting in.

Chait also said he was "contacted over email by a stranger who offered to help me by giving me an encryption key to protect me from hackers. He would not give me his name, meet me or talk on the phone, despite repeated requests."

The stranger also emailed The Atlantic's David Frum, James Fallows and Adam Serwer, Andrew Sullivan and Ars Technica's Dan Goodin.

Stanford professor Michael McFaul, the former U.S. ambassador to Russia, said he also received hacking warnings from Google. He added: "Given my background, one would have to guess that it's the Russians."

NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS

Report Rebuts Russia's Claims Of Restraint In Syrian Bombing Campaign

By Michael R. Gordon

New York Times, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — Russian military officials have vociferously denied that their airstrikes have killed civilians in Syria, going so far as to say that eyewitness accounts that a major hospital was bombed last year in the brutal fight to retake Aleppo were mere fabrications.

But a new analysis that draws on satellite images, security camera videos, social media and even footage from the Kremlin-backed Russian television network has challenged Moscow's claims that its airstrikes on behalf of the Syrian military were an exercise in prudent restraint.

The analysis shows that the hospital, contrary to claims by a Russian general, was bombed multiple times. It indicates that Russian aircraft used incendiary munitions and cluster bombs, despite the Kremlin's denials, and concludes that Syrian forces used chlorine gas on a far greater scale than is commonly believed.

The analysis is presented in a report, "Breaking Aleppo," which is to be made public on Monday by the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based policy research center. The report comes as President Trump has signaled an interest in forging better connections with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, which could include working more closely with the Russian military in Syria.

"Throughout the entire length of the battle for Aleppo, there have been multiple claims of violations of human rights and multiple denials," said Eliot Higgins, a senior fellow at the Digital Forensic Research Lab of the Atlantic Council.

"What we have been able to present now is a wealth of evidence confirming the targeting of civilian structures, namely hospitals, which in certain cases has been denied by the Russian Ministry of Defense," he added. "We have been able to confirm the use in civilian areas of a variety of indiscriminate weapons."

Syrian forces, backed by Hezbollah fighters, Iran's paramilitary Quds Force and Russian air power, took Aleppo in late December. The capture of the city was an important milestone that gave the government of President Bashar al-Assad control over all of Syria's major cities and strengthened Moscow's hand in discussions over the country's future.

But while the Atlantic Council report acknowledges that his victory in Aleppo has solidified Mr. Assad's hold on power, at least for now, it argues that the ruthless strategy and tactics used by the Syrian and Russian governments would make the Syrian president "a poor if not harmful partner" in efforts to defeat the Islamic State and other extremist groups.

Experts at the Atlantic Council have long urged the United States to do more to protect civilians in Syria and support the moderate opposition. In the report, the group employs hard evidence, including satellite images from DigitalGlobe, a commercial satellite company, fresh accounts from Syrian activists on the ground and photography published by Russia's Defense Ministry.

Much of the analysis of the photos and social media was done by Mr. Higgins, a Britain-based researcher who founded the investigative website bellingcat.com.

A reconstruction of one key episode — the July 16 bombing of another hospital, known as M2, in the Maadi district — was carried out by Forensic Architecture, a research organization at Goldsmiths, University of London, which was asked to take an independent look at the video and photographic evidence of the bombing.

Aleppo was divided in July 2012 between government- and opposition-controlled areas. With the support of Russia, the Assad government began a major offensive in September of last year to take the city.

Fragile and temporary cease-fires were used by the Syrians and their allies to prepare fresh offensives, which, despite Russian and Syrian denials, often targeted civilian areas.

One claim that the Atlantic Council report challenges was issued by Lt. Gen. Sergei F. Rudskoi, the head of the operations directorate of the Russian general staff, who insisted in October that no damage had been done to the al-Sakhour hospital in a Russian bombing raid. To buttress his case, General Rudskoi displayed satellite photos that he said had been taken between Sept. 24 and Oct. 11. Eyewitness accounts to the contrary, he added, were "mere fakes."

But a comparison of DigitalGlobe satellite photos taken on Sept. 25 and Oct. 13, the Atlantic Council report notes, shows the emergence of a large bomb crater near the hospital, also known as M10, and damage to the hospital building. Security camera videos from inside the hospital offer corroborating evidence of an Oct. 3 attack, as does a photo from the street by a local resident.

The report concludes that there were several reasons to think the attacks on the medical centers were deliberate, including the large number of strikes, the Assad government's knowledge of the terrain, and the Syrian government's practice of confiscating medical supplies from humanitarian aid convoys.

The M2 hospital was damaged by air and artillery strikes at least a dozen times between June and December.

Other photographic evidence points to the use of incendiary munitions and cluster bombs. The Kremlin-backed television channel, Russia Today, provided some of the evidence in video footage it showed in June that had been taken at a Russian air base near Latakia, Syria. (The version of the report that was later uploaded to YouTube deleted the images of the weapons being mounted on a Russian warplane.)

When a Russian team later entered eastern Aleppo to clear away unexploded ordnance, a photograph published by the Russian Defense Ministry showed the remains of cluster bombs, the Atlantic Council report notes.

A variety of reports from victims and video on YouTube indicate that Syrian government attacks with chlorine gas increased in the final phase of the battle for Aleppo. One video "showed a chlorine gas cylinder with its labels intact," the report said.

The use of chlorine bombs by the Syrian government, Mr. Higgins said, continued even after reports confirming their use were made by the United Nations and an international watchdog organization in The Hague that enforces the ban on the use of chemical agents in war.

Hezbollah Supports Syria Ceasefire And Political Talks

By Ellen Francis

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Syrian Opposition Picks Delegation To Geneva Talks

By Suleiman Al-Khalidi And Tom Perry

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Inter-Shi'ite Tension Mounts In Baghdad After Clashes

By Huda Majeed And Ahmed Rasheed

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Fireballs And Booby Traps: On The Front Lines With The Oil Workers Battling ISIS

By Peter Holley

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

QAYYARAH, Iraq — The flames exploded into the sky like a volcanic eruption, blanketing a swath of the Iraqi countryside in a noxious haze of black smoke.

The inferno reached more than 300 feet high on a recent afternoon when the wind shifted direction, bending the billowing wall of fire toward the men from Iraq's North Oil Co. on the ground below.

Within seconds, a fast-moving cloud of hot gas and thick smoke washed over the work site, blotting out the sun and sending workers and engineers scurrying for safety.

Some of the men sprinted toward their vehicles; others took cover in corrugated tin sheds, where they patiently waited for the wind to change direction so they could return to the work without being burned alive.

It was just another day in the life of an Iraqi oil worker.

"If hell is fire, then this place is hell on Earth," said Ayad al-Jboory, 42, assistant chief geologist for the North Oil Co. "It looks like the end of the world."

Fifty miles north in Mosul, beleaguered Islamic State fighters have lost control of half of their last major stronghold as Iraqi security forces advance. But at least five of the 25 oil well fires left in the militants' wake still rage, according to Reuters, forming a second front in the battle for Iraq that is no less dangerous for the proud men involved.

Each well is a battle unto itself, revealing the militants' willingness to harness chaotic destruction as a weapon.

Oil workers are fond of saying that the best protective clothing when battling a stubborn blaze is distance. In that case, the 100 or so men manning Well 77 several miles outside Qayyarah work so close to the flames that they might as well be naked. Their goal sounds simple enough: control the fire, stop the oil leak, cap the well and move on to the next one. The reality of the job is far more complicated.

Aside from the unpredictable flames, poisonous gases and rapidly changing conditions, the men from the North Oil Co. — most of whom are from Kirkuk and Irbil — toil for long hours using equipment prone to overheating and failure. There is also the ever-present threat of booby traps and explosive devices, which are still being found around damaged wells. The men — wearing tar-stained clothing, helmets and sometimes only scarves to cover their faces — keep photos of the homemade bombs on their cellphones to show family members and friends.

"This is a dangerous job — too hard," said Mohammed Marouf, a 40-year-old firefighter and father of four from Kirkuk. "My wife and my children know it's a hard job and it's not safe, and my wife wants to know why I won't stop. I tell her I am doing this for the future of our country.

"This is good for Iraq," he added.

The Islamic State "made hundreds of millions of dollars" by selling oil on the black market after capturing oil fields in Iraq and Syria in 2014, according to U.S. government estimates cited by Reuters.

Before Iraqi security forces retook this area in August, Islamic State fighters placed explosives at about 20 wells, and snipers detonated them from afar.

Experts say the militants may have many reasons for setting the flames.

"They tend to just do things to cause destruction and, basically, just to be nasty," Oxfam spokeswoman Amy Christian said. "They'll destroy water plants so there's no access to clean drinking water, for example."

Hamza al-Jawahiri, an official in the Iraqi Oil Ministry, said oil workers have fully repaired about half of the wells destroyed by the Islamic State. Collectively, he said, the damaged wells can produce 50,000 to 60,000 barrels of oil a day, much of which is bitumen — a particularly thick grade of crude used primarily in road construction.

All of the wells place the workers in extreme danger — for wages of about $50 a day.

"The biggest challenge that the workers are facing right now is the security situation, since they are working very close to a battlefield full of IEDs that have to be defused," Jawahiri said. "There's also the bad weather conditions. Working with huge fires means the wind can be deadly sometimes."

To date, workers said, no location had presented more problems than Well 77, where they have been trying to contain the flames for months. When they arrived here, the men said, the Islamic State was still lobbing mortars at the well. Now, they had another problem: The well was badly damaged and unusually deep, causing equipment to break, disgorging toxic gases and unleashing at the surface a massive column of fire so intensely hot that it could singe the skin of a person 100 yards away. Engineers on the ground estimated that the well was burning between 500 and 1,000 barrels of oil a day.

The battle was slow and exhausting, with firefighters aiming a stream of water at the wellhead while a backhoe struggled to remove rocks, tar and flaming sand that was being dumped at the men's feet. The goal, workers said, was to control the fire so they could move close enough to the wellhead to inject it with water and then cement, plugging the subterranean column permanently.

Progress ended when the backhoe overheated, forcing the men to drive it away from the fire and cool the machine with jets of water. It was the middle of January, and the temperature was in the low 50s. Last summer, the men said, they battled flames under a scorching sun in heat that topped 120 degrees.

The men work from sunrise to sunset, taking a midday break to eat lunch and pray under the billowing tower of smoke and fire. There have been injuries and burns over the past few months, but so far, supervisors said, nobody had been killed. Parked among the trucks and digging equipment, an ambulance is always on call.

Despite the perilous conditions, Jboory said, his men volunteered for the job, mostly because of national pride but also out of contempt for the Islamic State.

Asked what it will be like when the well is finally capped, the engineer beamed.

"Like Christmas," he said.

"The men are sacrificing everything to do this job — just like a soldier," Jboory added. "This is another way to fight ISIS. We already hate them, but each day under this fire and smoke, we hate them even more."

Afghan Official Says Joint Raid Killed 22 Civilians

By Mirwais Khan

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) – Afghan officials and local residents said Sunday that 22 civilians, mostly women and children, were killed during a joint operation carried out by U.S. and Afghan forces last week in the southern Helmand province.

The presidential envoy for security in Helmand, Jabar Qahraman, said the raid against Taliban insurgents in the Sangin district killed 13 people from one family and nine from another.

"We are saddened to hear the news of civilians being killed," he said. "When the Taliban use civilians as their shield against security forces, such incidents occur."

U.S. Navy Cpt. Bill Salvin, a military spokesman, said "we are working diligently to determine whether civilians were killed or injured as a result of U.S. airstrikes" carried out to support Afghan forces in and around Sangin. The investigation is "continuing and has not reached any conclusions," he added in a written statement.

The U.N. mission in Afghanistan meanwhile expressed "grave concern" at the violence in Helmand, saying its initial inquiries suggest airstrikes by international forces killed at least 18 civilians, "nearly all women and children."

Hameed Gul, a local resident, said he lost nine members of his family, including his mother and sister, in Thursday's raid. "It's all lie that they were attacking the Taliban," he told The Associated Press in the Helmand provincial capital, Lashkar Gah, where he was staying at the time of the raid.

Kareem Atal, the head of the provincial council in Helmand, said a man, two women and two children who were wounded in the raid have been brought to Lashkar Gah for treatment.

Helmand has seen months of heavy fighting between Afghan forces and the Taliban, who have repeatedly attacked Lashkar Gah. A suicide bomber targeting soldiers in the city on Saturday killed at least seven people.

The Taliban have stepped up attacks across Afghanistan since the U.S. and NATO formally concluded their combat mission at the end of 2014, leaving a smaller contingent of troops behind to focus on training and counterterrorism.

Associated Press writer Rahim Faiez in Kabul, Afghanistan contributed to this report.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Coalition Air Strikes Killed 18 Afghan Civilians, U.N. Says

By Josh Smith

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Netanyahu Heads To US Seeking To Reset Ties After Obama Years

By David Wainer

Bloomberg Politics, February 12, 2017

The Obama years sprang some unwanted surprises on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – like secret nuclear talks with Iran.

This week, in his first White House visit with President Donald Trump, Netanyahu's priority will be to make sure Israel is kept in the loop and that the two countries' positions are generally aligned, according to Michael Oren, Israel's ambassador to the U.S. for much of Barack Obama's term.

"The overriding goal will be to restore the relationship so that there are no surprises and no daylight," said Oren, now a deputy minister in the prime minister's office. "He'll want to restore the alliance and make sure the U.S. is, above all, standing by Israel and working together with Israel to fight common threats."

Netanyahu is trying to recalibrate ties with Israel's top ally after eight years of high-profile clashes with Obama. He sees a chance for a warmer relationship with Trump, who shares his alarm over the Iran nuclear deal and Islamist

extremists. Sunday evening, after a Cabinet discussion about the trip, the prime minister's office said by text that the two leaders would discuss Iran, Syria and the Palestinians, and relations with the new administration.

"All the ministers agreed on the great importance of tightening the relations with the United States," Netanyahu's office said in the statement, "both on the governmental level and the personal level."

Chemistry Lesson

Trump, in an interview published Sunday in the Israel Hayom newspaper, called the prime minister "a good man" and said the two have "always had good chemistry."

But there could be some hiccups. The White House has sent mixed messages on Israeli settlements – saying existing ones are not an obstacle to peace but new ones are unhelpful – and seems in no hurry to fulfill a campaign pledge to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, a measure likely to anger Palestinians and Muslims elsewhere.

Trump himself sharpened that theme with Israel Hayom, telling the paper – bankrolled by Netanyahu's billionaire supporter Sheldon Adelson – he's "not somebody that believes that going forward with these settlements is a good thing for peace." He said he was "studying" the proposed embassy move, and "we will see what happens."

Netanyahu is facing pressure from the settlement movement and his chief political rival, Education Minister Naftali Bennett of the Jewish Home party, to push for more construction, annex parts of the West Bank and disavow his commitment to Palestinian statehood. On Sunday the prime minister acknowledged the "great excitement" the visit had caused among settlement supporters, but also said it wasn't realistic to think Israel would be able to build without limits and that it was important not to provoke the new administration, Channel 2 television reported.

More likely, according to a senior official close to the prime minister, is that Netanyahu will outline for Trump his vision of a demilitarized Palestinian state with land swaps, and give the new president time to form a coherent policy on the issue. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential conversations.

Valued Ally

Netanyahu "will probably try to tell Trump that Israel won't surprise him," said Joshua Teitelbaum of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies outside Tel Aviv. "It's all about coordinating and reducing unnecessary surprises."

Even if Trump and Netanyahu don't agree on everything, the simple optics of improved relations can be important. By showing Israel is a valued ally, the U.S. gives the Jewish state leverage with its neighbors, said Israel Katz, who serves as intelligence minister in Netanyahu's cabinet.

"Countries in the region understand we are an agent that they need to be close to the U.S." Katz said in an interview in Tel Aviv. "We are seeing several examples of this already happening, with Israel acting as a go-between with countries in the region and the U.S."

In December, Israel enlisted Trump to try to quash a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements. While Egypt pulled the initial draft, other countries sponsored it and it passed after the Obama administration rejected Trump's call to veto the measure.

Last week's trip to London offered a snapshot of Netanyahu's priorities. After meeting with U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May, whose support he sought for new sanctions against Iran, Netanyahu was asked by reporters whether the settlement construction Israel has announced since Trump's Jan. 20 inauguration – more than 6,000 units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem – had been coordinated with Trump. The prime minister said the White House had been briefed.

"We do not surprise our friends," he said. "We keep them updated."

Netanyahu's Meeting With Trump To Set Tone For US-Israel Relations

By Ian Fisher

New York Times, February 12, 2017

JERUSALEM — As President Trump appeared to shift closer to the political center on several contentious policies on Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggested on Sunday that it was unrealistic to expect their two countries to agree completely on all issues.

But amid growing challenges from the right, Mr. Netanyahu said he was the strongest leader to navigate the relationship — the nation's most important, yet often its trickiest.

The Israeli leader's comments came the night before he leaves for Washington for his first face-to-face meeting with Mr. Trump as president.

While Mr. Trump at first appeared to give Israel's leaders carte blanche — he remained silent, for example, as the nation announced the construction of thousands of new homes in the occupied West Bank — he has since said he does not believe that "going forward with these settlements is a good thing for peace."

And on Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu was quoted on Army Radio telling members of his right-wing Likud Party that "to believe there are no restrictions now would be a mistake."

The meeting with Mr. Trump on Wednesday is expected to set the tone for the American-Israeli relationship, which was notably frosty under President Barack Obama because of Israeli settlements in occupied territory, Israel's vehement opposition to the nuclear deal with Iran and personality clashes with Mr. Netanyahu.

Although Mr. Trump's comments on the settlements have tamped down expectations on the right of a new era

FOIA CBP 000844

unfettered by American constraints, some analysts here portray the president's position as politically beneficial to Mr. Netanyahu. He is portraying himself as an experienced hand in dealing with Washington — unlike, he suggested, more aggressive forces on the right who are suggesting an annexation of some settlements.

"I have navigated Israeli-U.S. relations in a prudent manner, and I will continue to do so now," he told cabinet members on Sunday, according to an official transcript of his remarks, in which he noted that he and Mr. Trump "have known each other for years."

His main rival to the right, Naftali Bennett, the Jewish Home Party leader and education minister, warned Mr. Netanyahu not to discuss the possibility of a state for Palestinians — though Mr. Netanyahu has tepidly endorsed one and Mr. Trump has said repeatedly that he would like to make an unspecified "deal" for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

"If in their statements after the meeting they mention, for the first time in Trump's term, their obligation to forming Palestine or two states in one way or another, we will all feel it in our flesh for years to come," Mr. Bennett warned in a Facebook post. "The earth will shake."

The tussle between the two men is personal — Mr. Bennett would like to succeed Mr. Netanyahu as prime minister — and central to the longstanding conflict here: Mr. Bennett argues that the time for a separate state for Palestinians is over and that Israel has an opportunity under Mr. Trump to significantly expand Jewish presence in the West Bank.

Apart from the challenge from the right, the meeting comes at a difficult time for Mr. Netanyahu, as he faces at least three investigations into allegations of corruption.

Mr. Trump has also backed off, for now at least, a campaign promise to relocate the United States Embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, a move opposed by the Palestinians, who would consider it a de facto recognition of Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem after the 1967 war.

Here again, political analysts have seen Mr. Netanyahu's influence, with the prime minister possibly communicating that such a move was not a top priority given the reaction it could provoke among Palestinians.

In his statements on Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu also said he had registered his opposition to appointing the well-regarded former Palestinian prime minister, Salam Fayyad, as the United Nations envoy to Libya.

On Friday, the new American ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki R. Haley, opposed the appointment. "For too long, the U.N. has been unfairly biased in favor of the Palestinian Authority to the detriment of our allies in Israel," she said.

The Israeli news media also reported over the weekend that Tzipi Livni, a prominent Israeli lawmaker, may be offered a position as an under secretary-general for the United Nations chief, António Guterres.

Netanyahu Pledges To Promote 'Responsible Policies' At Trump Meeting

By Jeffrey Heller

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Netanyahu Is Urged Not To Use The Words "Palestinian State"When He Visits Trump

By William Booth

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu likes to boast to his boisterous cabinet that no one understands the Americans better than he does.

But in his many years in power, appeasing and challenging Republicans and Democrats alike, Netanyahu has never dealt with a president like Trump.

The two leaders will sit down as equals at the White House on Wednesday. They have known each other since Netanyahu served as Israel's ambassador to the United Nations in New York in the 1980s and was friendly with Trump's father, Fred.

Netanyahu has been in nonstop consultations with his advisers as they prep him for one of the most important meetings of his career.

Israeli officials say the prime minister will seek to strengthen his already warm rapport with Trump after years of feuding and policy clashes with the Obama administration. But there is stark division on what message his right-wing government wants him to deliver in Washington.

His education minister and coalition partner, Naftali Bennett, leader of the pro-settlement Jewish Home party, has pressed him to abandon his tentative commitment to the two-state solution, which he first announced in a speech at Bar Ilan University in 2009.

Calling the upcoming visit to the White House "the test of Netanyahu's life," Bennett warned the 67-year-old prime minister that there were two words he could not utter at the meeting: "Palestinian state."

"They must not be said. This is our test," Bennett cautioned, voicing an ultimatum from the increasingly powerful settlers' wing, a group that numbers more than 600,000 in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. If either side utters those words after the meeting, Bennett said, "the earth will shake."

Inside Netanyahu's own Likud party, activists have been circulating a letter calling for the prime minister to jettison the two-state paradigm.

FOIA CBP 000845

Israel's intelligence minister, Yisrael Katz, told Army Radio on Sunday: "Whoever talks about a Palestinian state today does not live in the real world. There is a general consensus among the public there is no way to reach it."

But Katz said Bennett was wrong to try to publicly force Netanyahu into a corner on the eve of his Washington trip.

There is broad agreement in Netanyahu's coalition cabinet that the prime minister should seek a mind-meld with Trump on Iran, which is seen not only by Israel but by its moderate Sunni Arab neighbors, such as Saudi Arabia, as the looming challenge to regional security.

Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said the Trump meeting should have one overarching goal. "The greatest threat to Israel is Iran, Iran and Iran," he said.

But as much as Netanyahu might want to keep circling back to Iran, the long-running Palestinian conflict has flared again, even as Israel begins its 50th year of military occupation.

After Trump's election, Israel's right wing was almost giddy with expectations of better days to come, hailing Trump as a savior of Greater Israel who would not only get tough with Iran, Israel's nemesis, but also would quickly move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and green-light a building boom for Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

But it has been a stormy few weeks — for the settlements and Netanyahu personally, who is facing down police investigations including an embarrassing probe into his family's receipt of thousands of dollars in gifts from wealthy benefactors, such as diamond jewelry, pink champagne and fancy cigars.

No politician likes to wake up to a front-page headline like the one in the Haaretz newspaper last week that read: "The Netanyahus' requests for gifts made me sick."

Late last month, after years of delays, the Israeli police finally carried out a supreme court order for the demolition of Amona, an illegal Jewish outpost in the West Bank built on private Palestinian land. Israeli TV screens blazed with the images of violent resistance for 24 hours.

Netanyahu and Lieberman quickly sought to shore up their right flank by announcing building plans for 5,500 more homes in the settlements.

Then Israel's parliament passed a controversial bill last week allowing the state to expropriate more private Palestinian land and grant it to settlers — so there would never be another Amona eviction.

Netanyahu supported the bill, but even his fellow Likudnik, Israel's president Reuven Rivlin, cautioned, "It will cause Israel to be seen as an apartheid state, which it is not," according to Israeli media accounts.

On Friday, Trump surprised Jerusalem when he gently warned Israel in an interview that building more homes in Jewish settlements was not "good for peace" and said he wanted Israel to "act reasonably" as his administration explores paths toward brokering peace talks with the Palestinians and Arab governments. Trump also said he would move cautiously on a possible relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, which Arabs have warned would inflame religious passions and spark violence.

The interview was published in Israel Hayom, the pro-Netanyahu newspaper owned by the prime minister's long-term supporter Sheldon Adelson, the casino magnate and GOP mega-donor who dined at the White House with Trump last week.

For the Israeli government, the most problematic section of the interview was Trump's statement that he and his son-in-law, senior adviser Jared Kushner, are considering a new round of peace talks to broker what Trump has called "the ultimate deal."

Orly Azoulay, a columnist for the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, wrote on Sunday, "The Israeli right wing appear to have popped their champagne corks a bit prematurely when they celebrated Trump's victory."

She added, "Presidents come and presidents go, but there is nothing new under the sun in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and nor are there any magical solutions."

On Sunday at his cabinet meeting, Netanyahu said, "I hear and understand that there is great excitement ahead of this meeting" with Trump, "with all different kinds of motivation behind it." But he stressed that his goals were "to strengthen the steadfast alliance with the U.S." and other national interests dependent on that tie.

In response to the calls to abandon the two-state solution, Netanyahu said his White House visit "requires a responsible and considered policy — and thus I intend to act.

"I have navigated Israeli-U.S. relations in a prudent manner," he said, "and I will continue to do so now."

Ruth Eglash contributed to this report.

Netanyahu May Seek To Reset U.S.-Israel Relations In Meeting With Trump

By Tracy Wilkinson, Contact Reporter

Los Angeles Times, February 12, 2017

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrives in Washington on Tuesday hoping to find in President Trump a kindred spirit and compliant ally after eight years of personal friction with President Obama.

The reality may be more complicated.

As a candidate, Trump signaled he would show staunch support for Netanyahu and his allies in Israel in crucial ways, including backing Israel's growing settlements in the West Bank, moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, and tearing up the Iran nuclear deal.

He also hinted he might reverse decades of U.S. policy by abandoning the search for a so-called two-state solution

FOIA CBP 000846

that envisions an Israeli nation and a Palestinian nation living side by side in peace.

But after three rocky weeks in office, Trump has backed down on a raft of foreign policy issues — reaffirming the "one China" policy with Beijing and vowing "strong support" for the NATO military alliance in Europe — and he now appears to be reevaluating his Israel policy as well.

Trump has publicly tapped the brakes on his support for expanding Jewish settlements on disputed land in the Palestinian West Bank, for example.

On Friday, Trump told an Israeli newspaper that "going forward with settlements" is not a "good thing for peace," a position that puts him far closer to traditional U.S. policy, and to Obama, than before.

Settlements "don't help the [peace] process. I can say that," Trump told Israel Today, which supports Netanyahu and is owned by American casino magnate and right-wing activist Sheldon Adelson. "There is [only] so much land left. And every time you take land for settlements, there is less land left."

That appears to put him at odds with Netanyahu, whose government has approved 6,000 new homes in existing settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem since Trump's inauguration.

It also may put Trump in conflict with his proposed pick for U.S. ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, a fierce advocate and financial backer of the settlements.

The first signs of change at the White House came last week, following a three-day visit to Washington by King Abdullah of Jordan, a strategic ally that neighbors Israel and that works closely with Washington against Islamic State, Al Qaeda and other militants.

Abdullah was the first Arab leader to meet with Trump, Vice President Pence and others in the new administration. He argued that moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem — the disputed city that both Israelis and Palestinians claim as their capital — would be so provocative as to threaten his own government.

Jordan's Hashemite Kingdom is held as the protector of some of Islam's most important holy sites, including the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, giving it special authority in the Muslim world. It also is regarded as custodian of Holy Land Christian sites such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which honors the site of Christ's burial.

Another shift came after Rex Tillerson was sworn in as secretary of State on Feb. 1 and met with senior diplomats about policies in the Middle East.

The next day, after Tillerson telephoned Netanyahu, the White House issued a statement that warned it would not support further expansion of settlements.

While the Trump administration did not consider settlements an obstacle to peace, it said, "The construction of new settlements or the expansion of existing settlements beyond their current borders may not be helpful in achieving that goal."

The White House did not deny a Jerusalem Post report the same day that said administration officials had confirmed for the first time that Trump is committed to a comprehensive two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict negotiated between the parties.

Officials said Trump would discuss the issue with Netanyahu when he visits the White House on Wednesday.

Netanyahu had famously frosty relations with Obama, and he welcomed Trump's election as a chance to find a more supportive partner in the White House.

"I imagine Netanyahu is looking to reset the U.S. Israeli relationship," said Susie Gelman, chair of the Israel Policy Forum, an advocacy group that focuses on peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Netanyahu believes he can strike common cause with Trump, according to diplomats and analysts, by enlisting Sunni-dominated Arab nations in a coalition against Iran and radical Islam, especially Islamic State.

But to keep Arab allies on board, Israel may need to make concessions to the Palestinians on settlements and other issues, several analysts said. They suggested Trump use his dealmaking skills when he sits down with Netanyahu, who is widely known by his nickname, Bibi.

"Trump should say, 'Bibi, what do you want? A one-state solution? Then what do you do with six million Arabs?,'" said Amnon Reshef, a retired Israeli army general who now heads a coalition of former security officials seeking peace with the Palestinians.

"'Or do you want a two-state solution, and I will bring all the Arab states on board? Let's make a deal!'" he added.

Ilan Goldenberg, a Middle East expert who served in the State and Defense departments in the Obama administration, said Netanyahu is unlikely to try to mollify Arab countries. "I don't see it happening with this Israeli government," he said.

Netanyahu may be more interested in talking about Iran than Palestinian peace and moving the U.S. embassy.

Many in Israel's security establishment have begrudgingly acknowledged that the internationally brokered 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which Netanyahu fiercely opposed, has successfully blocked Tehran's ability to build a nuclear bomb.

But Israel wants Washington to do more to punish Iran for supporting Shiite Muslim militants in Lebanon and elsewhere, testing ballistic missiles and other activities that have kept the region on edge.

"Netanyahu is going with ideas" on Iran, said Michael Oren, Israel's deputy minister for diplomacy and a former ambassador to the United States. "The thrust would be to connect the nuclear deal with Iran's other bad behavior."

FOIA CBP 000847

As negotiated by Iran and six world powers, the landmark arms control deal deliberately focused only on easing the threat of nuclear war, not on lesser dangers. It lifted international sanctions in exchange for Iran freezing its nuclear development program and destroying most of its nuclear infrastructure.

After the accord was signed, the Obama administration stiffened sanctions on Iran for its support of terrorist groups and its continued development of ballistic missiles. It also signed a 10-year defense deal that provides Israel a record $38 billion in security aid.

The Trump administration added new sanctions this month after an Iranian missile test, but publicly acknowledged it was not trying to undermine the nuclear deal.

Two-state Solution Crucial For Mideast Peace: Sens. Feinstein And Heinrich

By Dianne Feinstein And Martin Heinrich

USA Today, February 12, 2017

The United States has been unwavering in its commitment to Israel's security. We and other leaders have worked together to address the myriad challenges Israel faces, including terrorism, incitement, de-legitimization efforts and regional instability.

Previous administrations have consistently enhanced this assistance and cooperation, including Barack Obama's pledge of an additional $38 billion over 10 years, the largest security assistance package to any nation in U.S. history.

An integral component of the U.S.-Israel relationship is our shared commitment to negotiating a two-state solution, which would see the creation of an independent Palestine beside a democratic, Jewish Israel. This remains the only way to build a lasting peace and ensure Israel remains the democratic homeland of the Jewish people.

A two-state solution would resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, resulting in normal relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Achieving peace would help enhance cooperation, stability and security in the Middle East, which is in our own national security interests.

That is why previous administrations — Democratic and Republican alike — have engaged, with overwhelming bipartisan congressional support, in efforts to help facilitate such an outcome.

Yet a negotiated two-state solution seems further out of reach than ever before.

Since President Trump's inauguration, Israel has announced that it would dramatically expand settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Israeli politicians have proclaimed an end to the goal of a Palestinian state, and are agitating for the outright annexation of major Israeli settlement blocks in the West Bank. Furthermore, President Trump's nominee to be the ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, has been a benefactor of Israeli settlement expansion and has demonstrated an openly hostile attitude to a two-state solution. These Israeli actions and Friedman's views are not helpful to Israel, to the peace process, or to the national security of the United States.

Also standing in the way of peace is the incitement of violence and terror by Palestinians. Last year the world witnessed hundreds of indiscriminate attacks against ordinary Israelis. Terrorists used knives, guns and vehicles to kill, injure and maim random Israeli civilians. Even our own citizens were killed in these despicable terror attacks. As violence continues, it's understandable why many would doubt whether peace is possible in the face of such hatred.

Yet, according to public opinion polls, the majority of Israelis and Palestinians continue to favor a two-state solution.

We strongly believe that without two states for two peoples, the violence we see today will only become worse. Without two states, true security for Israel will vanish, alongside the legitimate aspirations of ordinary Palestinians for a state of their own.

POLICING THE USA: A look at race, justice, media

Perhaps most importantly, without an independent Palestine by its side, Israel cannot be both a democratic and majority Jewish state. Today, the Jewish people are already a minority between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. There are 6.3 million Jewish Israelis compared to 6.6 million non-Jewish minorities, most of them Palestinian Arabs.

Since the Jewish people are already a minority, a one-state solution cannot be both majority Jewish and democratic. We have not heard a plausible proposal where a one-state solution wouldn't require a Jewish minority to govern a non-Jewish majority.

To avoid this outcome, we urge the Trump administration to prioritize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to help create the conditions necessary for resuming direct talks between the two parties. That must include a halt to Israeli settlement construction and an end to Palestinian incitement of terror.

We recognize only the parties themselves can ultimately negotiate an end to their conflict. Yet, the United States must continue to play a constructive role, rather than turning a blind eye to actions by either party that undermine the prospects for peace.

Dianne Feinstein is a Democratic senator from California. Martin Heinrich is a Democratic senator from New Mexico. Follow them on Twitter: @SenFeinstein and @MartinHeinrich.

You can read diverse opinions from our Board of Contributors and other writers on the Opinion front page, on Twitter @USATOpinion and in our daily Opinion newsletter. To submit a letter, comment or column, check our submission guidelines.

FOIA CBP 000848

Trump And Trudeau Meet Face To Face For The First Time

By Rob Gillies

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) – The first face to face meeting between Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and U.S. President Trump could be the most important meeting for Canada in decades between leaders of the two neighbors.

Trudeau will be at the White House on Monday at a time many Canadians fear Trump will enact protectionist measures that could hurt their economy and worry the new president could be as combative as he was with the leaders of Mexico and Australia.

Trudeau, 45, and Trump, 70, have vastly different outlooks on the world. Trudeau is a liberal who champions global trade and has welcomed 40,000 Syrian refugees. Trump is a protectionist and his moves to restrict entry of refugees and immigrants are expected to come up Monday. But Trudeau is expected to emphasize common economic interests.

"We're going to talk about all sorts of things we align on, like jobs and economic growth, opportunities for the middle class – the fact that millions of good jobs on both sides of our border depend on the smooth flow of goods and services across that border," Trudeau said.

But Trudeau also said they are "going to talk about things that I'm sure we disagree on and we'll do it in a respectful way. Canada will always stay true to the values that have made us this extraordinary country, a place of openness."

After Trump signed the executive order pausing entries to the U.S. from seven Muslim-majority nations, Trudeau tweeted that Canada welcomed people fleeing persecution, terrorism and war. Trudeau said "diversity is our strength." His spokeswoman said Trudeau was looking forward discussing Canada's immigration and refugee policy with Trump.

But Trudeau isn't expected to poke the new president like his headstrong father, late Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, did to previous presidents during the almost 16 years he was in office.

Tall and trim, Justin Trudeau channels the star power of his storied father but is less confrontational.

American relations are crucial for Canada as more than 75 percent of the country's exports and 98 percent of its oil exports go to the U.S. About 18 percent of U.S. exports go to Canada. There are fears Canada could be sideswiped if Trump targets Mexico in a re-negotiation of the North American Free Trade agreement.

But Wall Street tycoon and Trump adviser Stephen Schwarzman has said "things should go well for Canada" if the president reopens NAFTA because the northern neighbor has a balanced trade relationship with the United States. Schwarzman, who leads Trump's economic advisory group, said other countries have large trade unbalances and markets that aren't as open to American trade as Canada's.

There's no indication Trump views Canada as a problem or an economic adversary but Trump is unpredictable, said Roland Paris, a former senior foreign policy to Trudeau. Paris called it a very important moment in U.S.-Canada relations and said he's cautiously optimistic the two will can have a constructive relationship focused on increasing economic ties.

"Canadians expect their prime minister to do two things: uphold Canadian values and to have an effective constructive relationship with the president of the United States. That's a balancing act and it's not necessarily going to be easy," Paris said.

Canada has not been the subject of a Trump tweet but fears remain about Trump's impulsiveness.

"We're dealing with someone who has abused the Mexican president and the Australian prime minister," said Robert Bothwell, a professor at the University of Toronto.

Bothwell said Trudeau should avoid confrontation considering the stakes and how delicate the situation is.

"Most American presidents have been pretty level headed. You have to go back to the monarchs of the Middle Ages or Roman Emperors. How does Nero feel today? Is his stomach acting up? What does the emperor decree?" Bothwell said. "We're back in the Roman empire. We haven't had anything like this."

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Trump-Trudeau Meeting Will Preview Trade, Border Issues

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visits Washington Monday seeking common ground on Nafta with President Donald Trump

By Paul Vieira And William Mauldin

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Canada's Conservatives Seek A Champion, And Redemption

By Ian Austen

New York Times, February 12, 2017

OTTAWA — Canada's Conservatives need a way back.

In many other Western democracies — including the big one just to the south — the political right has been on the rise lately, rallying behind leaders who tap into voters' anger, frustration and fears. But Canada's Conservatives are in the political wilderness, still smarting from their defeat by Justin Trudeau and his Liberals in October 2015, and lacking a permanent leader to replace Stephen Harper, the former prime minister, who quickly dropped from sight after the election.

So the Tories are asking: Who can take up our standard, cross swords with a charismatic and popular opponent, and lead us back to power in Parliament?

It will not be Rona Ambrose, the interim leader since Mr. Harper left. Though she is generally seen as having done a good job under the circumstances, party rules bar her from running for the permanent post.

Fourteen candidates have joined the race, though, and the Tories are sifting through them to choose a leader on May 28.

Whoever prevails also becomes the leader of the official opposition in Parliament — and, if the Tories can win the most seats in the House of Commons, would become the next prime minister. The next general election is expected in 2019.

The leadership vote will not be conducted like an American primary. Only dues-paying Conservatives enrolled before March 28 will be eligible to cast ballots — the current figure is just over 100,000 people, out of Canada's 26 million voters. And the complexities of the voting system make it hard to say who might be leading the pack.

For one thing, voters do not choose just one candidate; they rank several in order of preference. Then the ballots from each of the country's 338 electoral districts are tabulated separately, and the district results are translated into a point system. The points are added up nationally again and again, with the trailing candidates dropped one at a time and their points reallocated until someone secures a majority.

The system is meant to ensure that the winner has broad support across the country and not in just one region — but it can also deliver victory to a candidate who does not draw the most first-choice votes but is a popular second or third choice.

The contest is covered by Canada's federal election spending laws, which tightly restrict both donations and self-financing by the candidates. That, too, makes the race harder to handicap.

Even so, a few candidates have attracted more attention than the rest, which may be a rough reflection of their support. Here are sketches of four of the most prominent contenders.

Ms. Leitch, who was a cabinet minister in the Harper government, has cast herself as a populist, pushing immigration policies that are the opposite of those of Mr. Trudeau. In particular, Ms. Leitch wants all immigrants to be screened for "Canadian values," to maintain "a unified Canadian identity"; her list of those values includes hard work, equal opportunity, help for others, generosity, freedom and tolerance.

She raised eyebrows during the 2015 campaign when she and a cabinet colleague said they would set up a special tip line to report "barbaric cultural practices" to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It appeared intended to, among other things, prevent "honor killings." Ms. Leitch has since said she wished she had never made that announcement. (She was joined in it by Chris Alexander, who is now a rival candidate for the party leadership.)

Ms. Leitch, 46, is a pediatric orthopedic surgeon and former academic who represents a popular skiing and recreational area north of Toronto. While she frequently characterizes opponents, including some Conservatives, as "out-of-touch elites," some of her campaign materials include "P.C., M.D." after her name, indicating her membership in the Queen's Privy Council for Canada from her cabinet days, as well as her medical background.

Though he was late to officially join the race, Mr. O'Leary is arguably the best-known candidate. An investor, he became a celebrity on television, appearing on a nightly business-news program and a reality series, "Dragons' Den," in which people pitch business ideas to a panel of investors. Both were aired by the government-owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which Ms. Leitch wants to dismantle. Mr. O'Leary now appears on a similar American program, "Shark Tank."

Mr. O'Leary's policy platform so far is thin, based largely on his view that Canada under Mr. Trudeau is bound for economic ruin and that his business background would help the Conservatives campaign successfully on economic issues. Like many of his rivals, he calls for lower taxes and an end to Canada's carbon-pricing program.

Several factors may offset Mr. O'Leary's celebrity. He spends almost as much time in Boston as in Canada. In the past, he has been dismissive of Conservative lawmakers, who are now important influences in the race. And his ability to speak French, Canada's other official language, is weak; it was widely noted that he did not join the race until after the only scheduled French-language debate.

Mr. O'Leary, 62, has also made some prominent gaffes on social media. After the shooting deaths of six people at a mosque in Quebec last month, he posted a video of himself firing automatic weapons at a gun range in Miami; he later removed the video.

When Mr. Chong was a minister in Mr. Harper's government, he did something very unusual: He quit. He and others bristled at the tight leash Mr. Harper kept on his cabinet, but a government motion giving Quebec a form of nationhood within Canada was too much for Mr. Chong; he

FOIA CBP 000850

resigned rather than vote for the motion, as cabinet rules required.

He put more distance between himself and Mr. Harper by persuading Parliament in 2013 to pass a bill giving members some independent powers. The changes were modest, but it is very unusual in Canada for any bill introduced by an individual legislator, rather than the government, to become law.

Mr. Chong, the son of immigrants from Hong Kong and the Netherlands, could help the Tories appeal to foreign-born Canadians, a significant constituency. At 45, he is one month older than Mr. Trudeau and shares some of the prime minister's youthful political style.

Mr. Chong is an outlier in the race on some major policy questions, like carbon pricing: He wants to increase carbon taxes and use the proceeds to reduce income taxes. That might play well in Ontario, where Mr. Chong lives, but would be a hard sell to the Conservative base in western Canada.

Politicians in Quebec generally have a social democratic bent, but not Mr. Bernier, who describes himself as a libertarian. In Parliament, he represents the Beauce region of the largely French-speaking province, an area some Quebecers compare to Texas because of its conservatism.

Mr. Bernier wants to end all government aid to corporations, even though many companies based in Quebec, like Bombardier, the aircraft and rail car maker, depend heavily on the state. He wants to change guns laws, end carbon pricing, deregulate telecommunications companies, sell the post office and airports to private owners, and scrap a system that lets some kinds of farmers keep prices up through a legal cartel. Those farmers include Quebec's numerous and politically active dairy farmers.

Quebecers whose principal language is French have almost never been chosen to lead the Conservatives or their predecessor parties; it has happened only once in 150 years. Many of the party's core supporters in the west have long been resentful of what many see as a privileged place for Quebec within Canada. And Mr. Bernier, 54, had to resign as Mr. Harper's foreign affairs minister after he left secret government documents at the home of his girlfriend at the time, a woman with ties to organized crime. He returned to the cabinet in a more junior post three years later.

North Korea Test-fires Missile, Apparently Challenging Trump

By Eric Talmadge

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) – In an implicit challenge to President Donald Trump, North Korea appeared to fire a ballistic missile early Sunday in what would be its first such test of the year.

After receiving word of the launch, Trump stood at his south Florida estate with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who called the move "intolerable."

There was no immediate confirmation on the launch from the North, which had warned recently that it was ready to test its first intercontinental ballistic missile. The U.S. Strategic Command, however, said it detected and tracked what it assessed to be a medium- or intermediate-range missile.

North Korean media are often slow to announce such launches, if they announce them at all. As of Sunday evening, there had been no official announcement and most North Koreans went about their day with no inkling that the launch was major international news.

The reports of the launch came as Trump was hosting Abe and just days before the North is to mark the birthday of leader Kim Jong Un's late father, Kim Jong Il.

Appearing with Trump at a news conference at Trump's estate, Abe condemned the missile launch as "absolutely intolerable."

Abe read a brief statement in which he called on the North to comply fully with relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. He said Trump had assured him of U.S. support and that Trump's presence showed the president's determination and commitment.

Trump followed Abe with even fewer words, saying in part: "I just want everybody to understand and fully know that the United States of America stands behind Japan, its great ally, 100 percent."

Stephen Miller, Trump's chief policy adviser, said Trump and Abe had displayed "an important show of solidarity" between their nations.

"The message we're sending to the world right now is a message of strength and solidarity; we stand with Japan and we stand with our allies in the region to address the North Korean menace," Miller said during an interview Sunday with ABC's "This Week."

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the missile was fired from around Banghyon, North Pyongan Province, which is where South Korean officials have said the North test-launched its powerful midrange Musudan missile on Oct. 15 and 20.

The military in Seoul said that the missile flew about 500 kilometers (310 miles). South Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported that while determinations were still being made, it was not believed to be an intercontinental ballistic missile.

The missile splashed down into the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, according to the U.S. Strategic Command. Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters that the missile did not hit Japanese territorial seas.

FOIA CBP 000851

The North conducted two nuclear tests and a slew of rocket launches last year in continued efforts to expand its nuclear weapons and missile programs. Kim Jong Un said in his New Year's address that the country had reached the final stages of readiness to test an ICBM, which would be a major step forward in its efforts to build a credible nuclear threat to the United States.

Though Pyongyang has been relatively quiet about the transfer of power to the Trump administration, its state media has repeatedly called for Washington to abandon its "hostile policy" and vowed to continue its nuclear and missile development programs until the U.S. changes its diplomatic approach.

Just days ago, it also reaffirmed its plan to conduct more space launches, which it staunchly defends but which have been criticized because they involve dual-use technology that can be transferred to improve missiles.

"Our country has clearly expressed its standpoint, that we will continue to build up our capacity for self-defense, with nuclear forces and a pre-emptive strike capability as the main points, as long as our enemies continue sanctions to suppress us," Pyongyang student Kim Guk Bom said Sunday. "We will defend the peace and security of our country at any cost, with our own effort, and we will contribute to global peace and stability."

Kim Dong-yeop, an analyst at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies in Seoul, said the missile could be a Musudan or a similar rocket designed to test engines for an intercontinental ballistic missile that could hit the U.S. mainland. Analysts are divided, however, over how close the North is to having a reliable long-range rocket that could be coupled with a nuclear warhead capable of striking U.S. targets.

South Korean Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn, who is also the acting president, said his country would punish North Korea for the missile launch. The Foreign Ministry said South Korea would continue to work with allies, including the United States, Japan and the European Union, to ensure a thorough implementation of sanctions against the North and make the country realize that it will "never be able to survive" without discarding all of its nuclear and missile programs.

Associated Press writers Kim Tong-Hyung in Seoul, South Korea, and Jill Colvin in Palm Beach, Florida, contributed to this report.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

A Hastily Called News Conference Caps A Surreal Day For Trump In South Florida

By John Wagner

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — It was, in many respects, a surreal day in South Florida. It started with President Trump high-fiving Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on a Trump-branded golf course at a morning event that the media was kept from witnessing.

It ended with Trump summoning the same reporters to another Trump-owned property, where the president put on another display of friendship for Abe: a pledge at a late-night news conference to stand by Japan "100 percent" in the wake of North Korea's latest ballistic missile launch.

The hastily called news conference at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate was the third event during Abe's visit Saturday to showcase a Trump property.

The golf enjoyed by the two leaders (and golfing pro Ernie Els) took place at the Trump National Golf Club in Jupiter, Fla. From there, Trump and Abe were whisked by motorcade to Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Fla., where they had lunch (and by some accounts, got in some more golf).

The pair then returned to Mar-a-Lago, Trump's estate in Palm Beach, where Abe and his wife spent the weekend with Trump and his wife, Melania.

A couple of hours later, the news media were led through the gates of Trump's estate and allowed to witness the two couples standing at the main entrance of the property for what was billed as a photo spray. Reporters, who were asked not to shout questions, did so anyway.

Trump answered some of them, allowing that he and Abe were having a "very, very good" visit and that during the golf outing, "we got to know each other very, very well."

But the president ignored several other questions, including whether he planned to watch "Saturday Night Live" and whether he had anything to say about reports of a ballistic missile launched by North Korea — the first such provocation during Trump's presidency.

At that point, the press corps traveling with Trump was whisked back to the Marriott hotel that has served as its home base for the weekend. Trump aides called a "lid," meaning there were no more planned Trump appearance or travels for the night.

About an hour later, after many of members of the media had decamped to the hotel bar or ventured out for their first real meal of the day, a Trump aide sent an "URGENT" message saying the press pool needed to reassemble immediately for unstated reasons. It turned out Trump did have something to say about North Korea.

Reporters were then taken back to a heavily secured yet bustling Mar-a-Lago. Despite its designation by Trump as

his "winter White House," other events continue to be held on the property.

On Saturday, as Trump and Abe spoke about North Korea, a wedding reception was in full swing in a building less than 100 yards away connected by a walkway and canopy.

The news conference was staged in an ornate room, with chandeliers overhead. Shortly before Trump and Abe emerged, faint music could be heard — either from the wedding reception or elsewhere in the building where the two leaders would appear with the U.S. and Japanese flags behind them.

The joint appearance lasted barely two minutes.

Abe spoke in Japanese, and his words were translated by an aide to the side.

Among the points he made:

"North Korea's most recent missile launch is absolutely intolerable."

"North Korea must fully comply with the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions."

"During the summit meeting that I had with President Trump, he assured me that the United States will always [be with] Japan 100 percent, and to demonstrate his determination as well as commitment, he is here with me at this joint press conference."

Trump then took his turn at the lectern, offering this brief statement:

"I just want everybody to understand and fully know that the United States of America stands behind Japan, its great ally, 100 percent."

Trump made no mention of South Korea, another U.S. ally in the region, nor did he explicitly condemn North Korea's action.

The two men exited the room without taking questions.

As reporters were ushered out, another "lid" was called, ending a long day of Trump movements. All that was left was the latest episode of "Saturday Night Live," in which actor Alec Baldwin continued to lampoon the new president.

Trump Responds To North Korean Missile Launch With Uncharacteristic Restraint

By Peter Baker

New York Times, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — After North Korea threatened on New Year's Day to test an intercontinental ballistic missile, Donald J. Trump, then president-elect, reacted with characteristic swagger. He vowed to stop the North from developing a nuclear weapon capable of hitting the United States. "It won't happen!" he wrote on Twitter.

But six weeks later, after North Korea defiantly launched a missile into the sea, Mr. Trump, now president, reacted with surprising restraint. Appearing before cameras late at night on Saturday in Florida with his golfing guest, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, Mr. Trump read a statement of just 23 words that pledged American support for Tokyo without even mentioning North Korea.

The muted comment stood in sharp contrast to his response after Iran tested a ballistic missile, when he directed his national security adviser to publicly warn Tehran that he was "officially putting Iran on notice" and followed up with sanctions. If North Korea was testing the new president, as many analysts believe, then Mr. Trump seemed intent on showing that he would not be baited into a confrontation every time an American adversary tried to provoke him.

At least not right away. In his short time in office, Mr. Trump has shown that he can respond to events in measured ways one moment and with hotheaded bluster the next. But even after waking up on Sunday morning, Mr. Trump chose to publicly feud with Mark Cuban, the owner of the Dallas Mavericks, rather than the maverick leader of North Korea.

"I assume they don't have a strategy yet, so Trump with Abe by his side was properly taciturn, surprisingly so," said Jeffrey A. Bader, an Asia scholar at the Brookings Institution who served as President Barack Obama's Asia adviser. "But that can't hold. At some point you need to articulate a strategy."

The tempered response may also have reflected the fact that the missile launched on Sunday by North Korea was either a medium- or an intermediate-range missile, according to the American military, and not an intercontinental missile, or ICBM, capable of reaching the United States.

The missile flew 310 miles before dropping harmlessly into the Sea of Japan, according to the South Korean military, which identified it as an intermediate-range Musudan. North Korea regularly tests missiles in violation of United Nations resolutions, including roughly two dozen last year, but has boasted that it could test an ICBM "anytime and anywhere." The kind tested on Sunday poses a potential threat to American allies in Japan and South Korea and American forces in the Pacific, but could not strike the United States.

"It's yet unclear what missile was tested," said Thomas Karako, a missile expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "What is certain is that North Korea has now begun 2017 by continuing the aggressive pace of missile testing they've shown in recent years."

North Korea challenged Mr. Obama early in his tenure, too, with an underground nuclear blast four months after he took office. The effect was to harden Mr. Obama's attitude toward North Korea for the rest of his presidency, according to former aides. Rather than try to negotiate, as both Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush did, Mr. Obama focused on tightening international sanctions and bolstering alliances with Japan and South Korea.

Three weeks in office, the Trump administration is still trying to find its footing on foreign policy, especially in areas

FOIA CBP 000853

like North Korea that have not been Mr. Trump's main focus. Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson was sworn in on Feb. 1 and does not even have a deputy, much less a full team of trusted advisers, in place.

That North Korea's latest test came while Mr. Trump was hosting Mr. Abe for a multiday set of meetings, meals and golfing, first at the White House and then at Mr. Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla., was seen as no accident. And it may be that Mr. Abe counseled Mr. Trump on his response. In his own comments while he stood beside Mr. Trump, Mr. Abe called the launch "absolutely intolerable."

Asia experts and members of Congress praised Mr. Trump for reaffirming American support for Japan but lamented that he did not mention South Korea at the same time. "I was glad he issued the statement with the prime minister of Japan, but he ought to do it quickly with South Korea," Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic minority leader, said on "Face the Nation" on CBS. "South Korea is probably more susceptible to North Korea's virulence than any other country."

White House officials on Sunday remained quiet about the test and their emerging strategy. Stephen Miller, the president's senior adviser for policy, said Mr. Trump had sent a strong signal with his joint appearance with Mr. Abe.

"But we're going to be sending another signal very soon, and that signal is when we begin a great rebuilding of the armed forces of the United States," he said, also on "Face the Nation." "President Trump is going to go to Congress and ask them to invest in our military so once again we will have unquestioned military strength beyond anything anybody can imagine."

Short of military action, the menu of options available for Mr. Trump is not significantly better than it was for his predecessors. The United States and the United Nations have already imposed a wrenching array of sanctions and have largely isolated North Korea from much of the world.

On his first overseas trip since taking office, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis visited Japan and South Korea to reassure them of America's support despite statements by Mr. Trump during the campaign that called it into question. South Korean officials agreed to press ahead with development of a new missile defense system called Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense, or Thaad.

Most policy makers consider China crucial to any meaningful response to North Korea, given the nations' extensive economic and political connections, but it remains uncertain that Mr. Trump would have any better chance of persuading Beijing to take tougher action.

Mr. Trump had a fence-mending telephone call with President Xi Jinping of China last week and promised to stick by America's longstanding "One China" policy, reportedly at Mr. Tillerson's urging. But the president has been an unrelenting critic of China on trade and currency matters, and some of his top advisers, including Stephen K. Bannon, his chief strategist, view China as a long-term adversary.

"We will learn an enormous amount about his policy and his administration by how he deals with North Korea," said Evan S. Medeiros, a managing director at the Eurasia Group and a former Obama adviser. "It's the land of really bad options, and the threat is only becoming more serious and the window is closing. It will probably become the defining security challenge for the next president in Asia, if not globally."

North Korea Tests Trump's Resolve With Latest Missile Launch

By Aamer Madhani

USA Today, February 12, 2017

North Korea's latest ballistic missile test triggered swift condemnation Sunday from the international community, as the hermit nation's move challenges President Trump during his first month in office.

South Korea's defense ministry quickly charged in a statement that Kim Jong Un's missile launch — likely a medium- or intermediate-range missile — was "aimed at drawing global attention to the North by boasting its nuclear and missile capabilities."

"It is also believed that it was an armed provocation to test the response from the new U.S. administration under President Trump," the defense ministry said.

The missile launch came as Trump was hosting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. Trump and Abe made a joint appearance to condemn the launch Saturday night, just hours after the missile test was confirmed, with Abe calling it "absolutely intolerable."

Trump, in his brief statement with Abe, said only "that the United States of America stands behind Japan, it's great ally, 100%." But the president's policy adviser, Stephen Miller, told Fox News Sunday that Trump is sending an "unmistakable signal to North Korea and to the entire world."

Miller said Trump is determined to "reinforce and strengthen our vital alliances in the Pacific region as part of our strategy to deter and prevent the increasing hostility that we've seen in recent years from the North Korean regime."

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg urged North Korea "not to raise tensions further and to re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community." The European Union said in a statement that North Korea's "repeated disregard of its international obligations is provocative and unacceptable."

The Italian foreign ministry said North Korea's "repeated missile tests," combined with its development of a nuclear arsenal, "constitute a threat to peace and to international

security." A top Russian foreign affairs official said North Korea's behavior "is a definite challenge to all of us."

The missile test is "a reminder that we should not relax and should understand that the situation of the (Korean) peninsula is quite unstable and may turn into a hot conflict," Leonid Slutsky, head of the foreign affairs committee in Russia's lower house of Russia's parliament, said Sunday, according to the Interfax news agency.

The test by Kim — who has plainly stated his nuclear ambitions and has repeatedly launched missile tests — offered his first provocation of the year.

The U.S. Strategic Command said it detected and tracked what it assessed to be a medium- or intermediate-range missile that traveled about 300 miles and splashed into the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

The launch came less than two days after Trump, with Abe by his side, said Friday that defending against nuclear and missile threats from North Korea was a "very, very high priority." Trump's comment offered a pointed shift from some of his remarks about North Korea and security in the region during his run for the White House.

While campaigning, Trump's public comments often raised concerns for many in southeast Asia about his commitment to the region. Trump said he stood ready to speak with Kim to persuade him to abandon his nuclear ambitions.

Trump also jabbed at Japan on the stump, naming it along with China and Mexico as countries where the U.S is "getting absolutely crushed on trade." He also grumbled about Japan's military alliance with the United States, saying the U.S. provided security with little risk or cost for the Japanese.

Following his election, Trump created waves in the region by speaking directly with Taiwan's leader, Tsai Ing-wen, and suggesting he wanted concessions from China for his administration to maintain the long-standing "one China" policy. The policy, in place since 1979, accepts China's view of Taiwan as a breakaway province.

The comment by Trump raised the ire of Chinese President Xi Jinping. But Trump took steps last week to mend relations with a call to the Chinese leader in which he embraced the one China policy and backed down from his threat to review Taiwan's status.

North Korea launched several mid-range ballistic missile tests last year, and Kim said in a New Year's speech that North Korea was close to testing an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

After Kim announced his intention to test an ICBM, Trump vowed that "won't happen." During a visit to South Korea this month, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis reaffirmed plans to deploy a U.S. missile defense system in South Korea later this year, a step that Beijing opposes.

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., said the latest missile test should "only steel our resolve to deploy missile defense systems."

"It's time the regime had to face consequences for its behavior and that we said, 'enough is enough,'" Cotton said.

U.S. Will Strengthen Pacific Allies Against North Korea Hostility: Official

By Doina Chiacu

Reuters, February 12, 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 Faces Test Over North Korea Missile

White House response could give clues to administration's approach to foreign-policy challenges

By Peter Nicholas, Carol E. Lee And Jonathan Cheng

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

North Korea Says Test Launch Of New Missile Type A Success

By Ju-min Park

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

N. Korea Says Successfully Tested New Ballistic Missile

AFP, February 12, 2017

Seoul (AFP) – North Korea said Monday it had successfully tested a new ballistic missile, triggering a US-led call for an urgent UN Security Council meeting after a launch seen as a challenge to President Donald Trump.

The North's leader Kim Jong-Un "expressed great satisfaction over the possession of another powerful nuclear attack means which adds to the tremendous might of the country", state news agency KCNA said.

The missile was launched Sunday near the western city of Kusong and flew east about 500 kilometres (310 miles) before falling into the Sea of Japan (East Sea), South Korea's defence ministry has said.

Photos released by KCNA showed the missile blasting into the sky with a smiling Kim watching from the launch site's command centre, surrounded by dozens of cheering soldiers and scientists.

It said Kim "personally guided" preparations for Sunday's test, which it described as a surface-to-surface medium long-range Pukguksong-2, a "Korean-style new type strategic weapon system".

KCNA said the missile was powered by a solid-fuel engine – which requires a far shorter refuelling time than conventional liquid fuel-powered missiles, according to Yun Duk-Min of the state-run Institute for Foreign Affairs and Security in Seoul.

"They leave little warning time and therefore pose greater threat to opponents," he said, adding that such missiles are harder to detect before launch by satellite surveillance.

The announcement was the first time a Pukguksong-2 has been mentioned, although the North last August test-fired what it said was a submarine-launched missile marked as a Pukguksong-1, a name which translates as the "North Star".

Kim said at the time that the missile, which was launched towards Japan, put the US mainland and the Pacific within striking range.

But the North has previously made claims for its weapons capabilities that analysts consider unconvincing.

– Armed provocation –

The South has said that the latest launch, the first such test since last October, was designed as a test for Trump, who responded to the provocation by pledging "100 percent" support for Washington's key regional ally Japan.

"Today's missile launch... is aimed at drawing global attention to the North by boasting its nuclear and missile capabilities", Seoul's defence ministry said Sunday.

"It is also believed that it was an armed provocation to test the response from the new US administration under President Trump," it added.

The United States, Japan and South Korea responded to the North's confirmation by requesting an urgent UN Security Council meeting to discuss the launch.

The council is expected to hold consultations on Monday.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, whose country would be in range of a hostile North Korean missile launch, called the test "absolutely intolerable" during an impromptu press conference with Trump in Florida on Sunday.

North Korea is barred under UN resolutions from any use of ballistic missile technology. But six sets of UN sanctions since Pyongyang's first nuclear test in 2006 have failed to halt its drive for what it insists are defensive weapons.

Last year the country conducted two nuclear tests and numerous missile launches in its quest to develop a nuclear weapons system capable of hitting the US mainland.

South Korea's acting president Hwang Gyo-Ahn vowed a "corresponding punishment" in response to the launch, which came on the heels of a visit to Seoul by US Defense Secretary James Mattis this month.

Mattis had warned Pyongyang that any nuclear attack would be met with an "effective and overwhelming" response.

North Korea Claims Progress On Long-Range Goal With Missile Test

By Choe Sang-Hun

New York Times, February 13, 2017

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea said on Monday that it had successfully tested a new nuclear-capable intermediate-range ballistic missile, claiming important progress in being able to strike its enemies with long-range missiles tipped with nuclear warheads.

Confirming the missile test detected by the United States and South Korean authorities on Sunday, the North's official Korean Central News Agency said it had launched an intermediate-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile named Pukguksong-2, or Polaris-2. North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, inspected the test, the news agency said.

"He expressed great satisfaction over the possession of another powerful nuclear attack means, which adds to the tremendous might of the country," the news agency said, using its typically boastful tone.

The United Nations Security Council plans to hold an urgent meeting Monday on the missile launch at the request of the United States, Japan and South Korea.

The Korean Central News Agency reported that the missile, which it said could carry a nuclear warhead, used a high-thrust, solid fuel-powered engine and was fired from a self-propelled missile launching truck.

That is an important stride for North Korea as it pushes ahead with its proclaimed goal of building a capability to attack the United States with an intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM.

North Korea has never test-fired an ICBM. But the successful test of the Pukguksong-2 reflected a considerable enhancement of the North's missile capabilities. The country has had a spotty record in test-launching the Musudan, which had been the North's only known intermediate-range ballistic missile until the Pukguksong-2 was unveiled on Sunday. Its last Musudan test, in October, ended in failure.

The use of a solid fuel-powered engine is also an important advance for the North. Most of its ballistic missiles rely on liquid fuel. But the use of solid fuel greatly shortens the time needed to prepare the missile for launch and increases its mobility on the road, making it harder to detect signs of an impending attack, according to military analysts.

"Now our rocket industry has radically turned into high-thrust solid fuel-powered engine from liquid-fuel rocket engine and rapidly developed into a development- and creation-oriented industry, not just copying samples," Mr. Kim was quoted as saying.

On Sunday, the South Korean military said the North Korean missile was launched from the northwestern town of Banghyon and flew 310 miles before landing in the sea between the North and Japan. It reached an altitude of 340

miles, the military said, adding that it believed the missile was a modified version of the North's intermediate-range Musudan missile.

The Musudan uses liquid fuel.

North Korea said the new missile was based on the solid-fuel Polaris, the country's first submarine-launched ballistic missile, or SLBM. After several failed attempts, the North said in August that it had successfully launched the SLBM, claiming that the continental United States, as well as American military bases in the Pacific, were now within the range of its missiles, an assertion that military experts questioned.

Analysts and defense officials in the region said that North Korea was still years away from achieving the capability that Mr. Kim claimed. The country still does not have submarines large and advanced enough to travel long distances to attack distant targets across the Pacific without being detected, they said.

But the North's tests of SLBMs and the Pukguksong-2 demonstrated the advances the secretive country had made in its efforts to enhance the range and stealth of its missiles, South Korean military officials said. On Monday, North Korea said it launched its Pukguksong-2 at a sharp angle to keep it from landing too close to Japan, indicating that it could have flown further than 310 miles if it had launched it at a normal angle.

"Thanks to the development of the new strategic weapon system, our People's Army is capable of performing its strategic duties most accurately and rapidly in any space: under waters or on the land," the North said.

Although North Korea has never fired an intercontinental ballistic missile across the Pacific, it has boasted of successfully testing crucial technologies in the past year. In March, it reported the successful ground test of a newly designed solid fuel rocket engine. A month later, it reported a successful ground test of a new intercontinental ballistic missile engine.

Mr. Kim reminded the region of his missile threats during his New Year's Day speech, in which he claimed that his country was in a "final stage" of preparing to conduct its first test of an intercontinental ballistic missile. North Korea later said it could flight-test one "anytime, anywhere."

When he visited South Korea this month on his first official trip abroad, Jim Mattis, the United States defense secretary, emphasized the importance of deploying an advanced missile defense system, known as Thaad, in the country this year to counter the North Korean threat.

The Latest: UN Security Council To Meet On North Korea

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) – The Latest on North Korea's missile launch (all times local):

11 a.m.

The United States, Japan and South Korea have requested an urgent meeting of the U.N. Security Council on North Korea's latest ballistic missile launch.

A spokesman for the U.S. Mission to the United Nations said Sunday night that the meeting is expected to take place Monday. The spokesman spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The North Korean missile is thought to have flown about 500 kilometers (310 miles) before going down in international waters.

U.S. President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe learned about the launch while in Florida together. Abe called the move "absolutely intolerable," while Trump said his administration "stands behind Japan, its great ally, 100 percent."

9:20 p.m.

Italy says North Korea's "repeated missile tests" threaten peace and that the country must stop challenging the international community.

In a statement Sunday, the Italian foreign ministry expressed "great concern" about the news that the North had launched a ballistic missile. It said the repeated tests, combined with North Korea's development of a nuclear arsenal, "constitute a threat to peace and to international security."

Italy said North Korea "must abandon the development" of such an arsenal and "interrupt its path of challenging the international community and of self-isolation."

North Korea appeared to fire a missile early Sunday in its first such test of the year. It conducted two nuclear tests and a slew of rocket launches last year.

7:10 p.m.

In the wake of North Korea's latest missile launch, a top Russian foreign affairs figure says other countries must step up their work to try to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Leonid Slutsky, head of the foreign affairs committee in the lower house of the Russian parliament, was quoted as saying Sunday by the Interfax news agency that North Korea's behavior "is a definite challenge to all of us" and "a reminder that we should not relax and should understand that the situation of the peninsula is quite unstable and may turn into a hot conflict."

He added, "In connection with this, we need to work intensively on the Korean dossier and not slow down the pace for all of us."

Slutsky was quoted as saying he believed U.S.-Russia cooperation on the matter was possible "however utopian that may appear now."

1:50 p.m.

The U.S. Strategic Command says it detected and tracked what it assessed was a medium- or intermediate-range ballistic missile test-fired by North Korea.

It says it did not pose a threat to North America.

The command said the launch occurred near the northwestern city of Kusong.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned in his New Year's address that his country was ready to test its first intercontinental ballistic missile, which could threaten the U.S. mainland.

---

1 p.m.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is condemning North Korea's latest missile launch as "absolutely intolerable" and President Donald Trump is assuring Japan that the U.S. stands behind it "100 percent."

Abe and Trump appeared together for a statement Saturday night following reports that North Korea fired a ballistic missile in what would be its first such test of the year.

In a ballroom at Trump's south Florida estate, Abe read a brief statement in which he called on the North to comply fully with relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. He said Trump has assured him of U.S. support and that Trump's presence showed the president's determination and commitment.

Trump followed Abe with even fewer words, saying in part: "I just want everybody to understand and fully know that the United States of America stands behind Japan, its great ally, 100 percent."

12:30 p.m.

South Korea's presidential Blue House says the presidential security director Kim Kwan Jin has spoken with President Donald Trump's national security adviser Michael Flynn over the phone following North Korea's missile test launch.

According to the statement, the two officials strongly condemned the launch and agreed that the countries will explore every possible way to suppress North Korean provocations.

11:30 a.m.

South Korea says North Korea's missile test-launch, along with Kim Jong Un's threat to fire an intercontinental ballistic missile in his New Year's address, shows the "irrational nature" of a government that "fanatically" obsesses with developing nuclear ballistic missiles.

South's Foreign Ministry issued the statement in response to what it said was the North's first ballistic missile launch this year. It strongly condemned the launch as a "blatant and obvious" violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and a "serious threat" to international security.

The ministry says that the South will continue to work with allies including the United States, Japan and the European Union to ensure a thorough implementation of sanctions against the North and make the country realize that it will "never be able to survive" without discarding all of its nuclear and missile programs.

10:45 a.m.

South Korea's Acting President and Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn says his country will respond to punish rival North Korea for Sunday's missile launch.

According to Yonhap news agency, Hwang says South Korea in tandem with the international community "is doing its best to ensure a corresponding response to punish the North" for its missile launch.

South's military has confirmed that the missile launched Sunday flew about 500 kilometers (310 miles) into the sea. Yonhap reported that while determinations are still being made, it was not believed to be an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the U.S. mainland.

---

10 a.m.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga has told reporters the missile test-fired by North Korea did not hit Japanese territorial seas.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency says that the Japanese government confirmed that the missile fell in seas between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff says South Korean and U.S. military officials are analyzing further details from the launch early Sunday.

In response to the launch, South Korea held a National Security Council meeting at the presidential Blue House, which was chaired by Kim Kwan Jin, the presidential national security director.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Angela Merkel, Squeezed By Far Right, Now Faces A Rising Left, Too

By Alison Smale

New York Times, February 12, 2017

BERLIN — She is considered the indispensable European, yet one of the biggest questions looming over the Continent's crucial elections this year is whether Germany still regards Angela Merkel as indispensable, too.

Seven months before national elections in Germany, the prevailing wisdom has held that Ms. Merkel, now seeking a fourth four-year term as chancellor, is most vulnerable to the rising popularity of the country's far right, just as other populist, far-right parties are gaining in coming elections in the Netherlands and France.

Yet suddenly, Germany's left has unexpectedly resurged, prompting Der Spiegel magazine this weekend to pose a question on its cover: "Will She Fall?"

A reliable answer is not in sight. The shocks of 2016 — Britain's vote to leave the European Union and the election of Donald J. Trump as president of the United States — have profoundly shaken Germany, which depends more than any other European nation on Pax Americana and global institutions set up after World War II.

But on Sunday, the rebound of the left — along with the broad German distaste for Mr. Trump that has helped fuel it — was on full display. The popular center-left Social Democrat Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who has served in Ms. Merkel's coalition government as foreign minister for seven years, won the presidency with 931 votes in the 1,260-member assembly that elects the president to a five-year term.

Despite being a largely ceremonial position, the presidency provides stature and an important platform for Mr. Steinmeier, a popular and charismatic politician. In his brief acceptance speech, he encouraged Germans to be bold in difficult times.

"If we want to give others courage, then we must have some ourselves," he said on a day when many other speakers evoked the country's dark past and its emergence as a democracy after the Nazis' defeat in World War II.

One marvel of traveling the world, he said, was to realize that Germany has become a model. "Isn't it wonderful that this, our difficult fatherland, is seen as an anchor of hope for many people in the world?" Mr. Steinmeier said.

Before the vote, the conservative head of parliament, Norbert Lammert, gave a surprisingly fiery speech that — without mentioning names — attacked Mr. Trump and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia for trying to divide or weaken Europe.

"Whoever champions a closed mind instead of openness to the world, whoever literally walls themselves in, bets on protectionism instead of free trade and preaches isolationism instead of states cooperating, and declares 'We first' as a program, should not be surprised if others do the same — with all the fatal side effects for international ties which we know from the 20th century," Mr. Lammert said. That goes, he added, for individual European states "but also for our great partner country across the Atlantic."

Once, it would have been rare for German politicians to lecture other democracies on values, especially the United States, but Germany is now regarded as a critical pillar in upholding the liberal Western order, which is one reason the Sept. 24 national elections are being watched so closely.

It is also why some of Ms. Merkel's fellow conservatives quietly grumbled that she was outfoxed when she agreed to put Mr. Steinmeier forward as the presidential candidate of her grand coalition government, which unites her conservative bloc with the center-left Social Democrats. Even as the presidency stands above party politics, Mr. Steinmeier, 61, a lawyer and lifelong politician, is likely to be a boon for his party.

His election coincided with a Social Democratic surge in opinion polls since the center-left chose Martin Schulz, a former president of the European Parliament, to lead them into battle against Ms. Merkel in the elections.

Mr. Schulz grew up in a village in the Aachen area, becoming mayor of the nearby town of Würselen in 1987, and likes to tell stories from those days to portray himself as an ordinary guy. He first won election to the European Parliament in 1994, going on to become president in 2012. Most unusually for a German politician, he did not finish high school with a certificate, and trained initially as a bookseller.

He recently outpolled Ms. Merkel in personal popularity, 50 percent to 34 percent, in the widely regarded Politbarometer poll this month, albeit with a slightly smaller degree of support than Ms. Merkel's last Social Democratic challenger had at a similar stage of the 2013 race.

Perhaps because he has spent most of his political career in European institutions in Brussels, Mr. Schulz can appear fresh to German voters.

"What he is doing is filling a vacuum which has obviously arisen," said Franz Müntefering, a veteran Social Democrat leader. "He is reaching people through emotions."

In its weekend cover story, Der Spiegel described the current period as "the twilight of Merkel" and noted that she had appeared listless of late.

Ms. Merkel's conservative bloc appears somewhat rattled. Her respected finance minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, the longest-sitting member of Germany's parliament, used an interview in Der Spiegel this weekend to accuse Mr. Schulz of Trump-style populism.

"When Schulz lets his supporters shout, 'Make Europe great again,' then it is almost word for word Trump," Mr. Schäuble told the newsmagazine.

Sigmar Gabriel, the Social Democrat who has replaced Mr. Steinmeier as foreign minister, swiftly retaliated: "The radical and ill intentioned mockery" in American politics "should not be swept in to Germany," he said.

FOIA CBP 000859

Unquestionably, Mr. Trump's election has so deeply altered the geopolitical landscape for Ms. Merkel. She has kept a cool distance, and the two leaders are expected to meet for the first time this spring.

Domestically, Ms. Merkel is contending with a continuing political backlash to her 2015 decision to admit more than one million migrants, many of them Muslim, into the country. The far-right Alternative for Germany party, which started as a movement against the euro currency, now carries an anti-migrant, anti-Muslim message and has leaders who have sympathy for Mr. Trump's politics.

Tellingly, Frauke Petry and other Alternative for Germany leaders did not applaud with everyone else during Mr. Lammert's speech when he attacked isolationism or what he termed a "We first" attitude. Under pressure, Ms. Merkel has backpedaled somewhat in recent months, reducing the influx of migrants and taking a tougher line on deportations.

As is often the case, people outside the bubble of national politics sounded considerably less stirred when asked about Ms. Merkel's standing.

Metin Elcivan, 41, who helps run a corner store in western Berlin's Schöneberg district, was certain that German voters would prove conservative. "I think nothing will change at the elections," he said, "and that we will have a grand coalition again, with Merkel as chancellor."

Germany's New Trump-Critic President Sees Stormy U.S. Ties Ahead

By Patrick Donahue

Bloomberg News, February 12, 2017

Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a vocal critic of Donald Trump elected as Germany's 12th postwar president on Sunday, predicted "difficulties" in relations with the U.S. as the global order is upended by the new administration in Washington.

Asked whether he would seek to improve relations with Russia, the Social Democrat, who served two stints as foreign minister under Chancellor Angela Merkel, said the world was confronting a "complete re-ordering of international relations."

"In the past we were always certain that we would have more difficult negotiating partners in the east," Steinmeier told broadcaster ZDF hours after he was overwhelmingly elected to the mostly ceremonial post by a special assembly. "Suddenly we're confronted with a situation in which we'll at the very least deal with uncertainty and also difficulties in trans-Atlantic relations."Trump's Counterpart

Steinmeier will be President Trump's counterpart according to protocol, even if the German presidency lacks the political or policymaking power held by the chancellor. While Merkel steered clear of sharing her views on Trump during the U.S. election campaign, Steinmeier, as her top diplomat, vociferously derided what he saw as a campaign that broke taboos and threatened trans-Atlantic bonds.

Steinmeier, who once called Trump a "hate preacher," was asked whether he felt his view had been vindicated by Trump's first three weeks in office.

"This isn't about feeling confirmed, but I don't think I was the only one to feel really shocked at what was happening in the U.S. campaign," Steinmeier told ZDF. "I really could never have predicted what happened there."

Steinmeier, 61, was elected with about three-quarters of the vote in the Federal Assembly, a constitutionally mandated body made up of lawmakers from the lower house and party representatives from the German states. He succeeds Joachim Gauck, 77, the one-time Protestant pastor and political dissident in communist East Germany, who opted to stand down after serving a single five-year term. Gauck will remain in office until March 18.

Germany's presidency mostly involves representing the country abroad, although Gauck has also intervened in domestic politics, including on Merkel's handling of the refugee crisis.Popular Politician

Steinmeier, who had a 79 percent approval rating this month in a poll for public broadcaster ARD, emerged as a presidential hopeful after Merkel failed to find a suitable candidate from within her party bloc willing to run. Sigmar Gabriel, the outgoing Social Democratic leader who succeeded Steinmeier as foreign minister, stepped into the void, advocating for Steinmeier as the coalition's choice. Wanting to avoid a costly battle over a presidential pick ahead of the Sept. 24 election, Merkel relented.

Even if Merkel's support was reluctant, few questioned Steinmeier's ability to take over the country's highest office. Steinmeier came to Berlin as the chief of staff to former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, overseeing German foreign intelligence in the years after the Sept. 11 attacks in the U.S. When Merkel took office in 2005 with the Social Democrats as junior partner, the Schroeder acolyte became foreign minister.

Steinmeier challenged Merkel for the chancellorship in 2009, which resulted in the Social Democrats' worst result since World War II and a legislative term in the opposition, which Steinmeier led in the lower house. He returned to the Foreign Ministry when Merkel formed another so-called grand coalition with the SPD in 2013.

Germany Picks Anti-Trump President As Trans-Atlantic Bonds Fray

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

BERLIN — Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the former German foreign minister who was a vocal critic of Donald Trump during the U.S. campaign, was elected Sunday as the country's 12th postwar president.

The Social Democrat, who served two stints as foreign minister under Chancellor Angela Merkel, emerged as her governing coalition's candidate in November as their parties sought to avoid a political spat over the appointment in an election year. With the support of Merkel's Christian Democratic-led bloc and the Social Democrats in a special assembly on Sunday, Steinmeier was elected in the first round to the mostly ceremonial post.

While Merkel steered clear of sharing her views on Trump before his election as president, her top diplomat vociferously derided what he saw as a campaign that broke taboos and threatened trans-Atlantic bonds. At one point, Steinmeier called Trump a "hate preacher." As head of state, Steinmeier will be Trump's counterpart, according to protocol, even though the German presidency lacks the political or policymaking power held by the chancellor.

The day after Trump's surprise election victory, Merkel issued a couched warning that offered the new U.S. president German cooperation based on joint values, including democracy, respect for the rule of law and for human dignity "independent of origin, skin color, religion, gender, sexual orientation or political views." Steinmeier was less diplomatic.

"The result is not what most Germans would have wished," Steinmeier said Nov. 9. "I don't want to sugarcoat anything. Nothing will be easier, many things will become more difficult."

Steinmeier shunned political tension or any mention of Trump in an eight-minute speech after his election, though he cited Germany as an "anchor of hope" in an increasingly unsettled world.

"We're living in tumultuous times; many in our country feel insecure," he told the assembly after winning 931 of 1,253 votes cast.

Steinmeier, 61, will succeed Joachim Gauck, 77, who opted to stand down after serving a single five-year term. Gauck will remain in office until March 18.

Steinmeier, who had a 79 percent approval rating this month in a poll for public broadcaster ARD, came forward as a presidential hopeful after Merkel failed to find a suitable candidate from within her party bloc willing to run.

The Social Democrats have enjoyed a surge in support after the surprise candidacy for chancellor of Martin Schulz, the former European Parliament president. Enthusiasm for Schulz in the SPD base has narrowed the gap with Merkel seven months before the vote, with one poll last week showing the party ahead.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier Is Elected As Germany's President

Former foreign minister to take on role in March, months before German election

By Friedrich Geiger

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Germany Picks Frank-Walter Steinmeier To Be President

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

BERLIN — A special assembly elected former German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier by an overwhelming majority Sunday to be the country's new president.

Steinmeier was elected in Berlin by the assembly made up of the 630 members of parliament's lower house and an equal number of representatives from Germany's 16 states.

He received 931 of the 1,260 votes. Steinmeier succeeds Joachim Gauck, 77, a former pastor and East German pro-democracy activist who did not seek a second five-year term because of his age.

The German president has little executive power, but is considered an important moral authority and symbol of the country as its host for visiting dignitaries.

"Let's be brave, because then we don't have to be afraid of the future," Steinmeier said in his acceptance speech.

He said the world faces "rough times," but that Germany, as a functioning democracy, had the responsibility to fight for stability.

"Isn't it actually wonderful, that this Germany, our difficult fatherland, that this country has become an anchor of hope in the world for many," after overcoming wars and totalitarianism, Steinmeier said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel congratulated Steinmeier and said she was convinced he would be an excellent president who would have the support of the vast majority of the people.

"This is a good day for Germany," Merkel said.

Steinmeier, 61, a Social Democrat, had the backing in the election of Merkel's "grand coalition" of center-right and center-left parties.

The presidential vote was likely one of the last moments of coalition unity ahead of a parliamentary election in September in which Merkel is seeking a fourth term. Both sides hope to end the "grand coalition."

A few years ago, Steinmeier took a several-months absence from politics, to donate one of his kidneys to his wife Elke Buedenbender.

Buedenbender, who is a judge, will not work during her time as first lady to avoid possible conflicts of interest.

Steinmeier has long been one of Germany's most popular politicians. As former chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's chief of staff, he was a main architect of Schroeder's 2003 package of economic reforms and welfare cuts.

Under Merkel, he served twice as foreign minister — from 2005 to 2009 and again from 2013 until this year, with a stint as opposition leader in between.

Steinmeier is normally studiously diplomatic, but he strongly criticized Donald Trump during the U.S. election campaign.

Asked in August about the rise of right-wing populism in Germany and elsewhere, Steinmeier criticized those who "make politics with fear." He cited the nationalist Alternative for Germany party, the promoters of Britain's exit from the European Union, and "the hate preachers, like Donald Trump at the moment in the United States."

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

The Man Just Elected As Germany's Next President Once Called Trump A 'Hate Preacher'

By Erik Kirschbaum

Los Angeles Times, February 12, 2017

Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany's long-serving foreign minister who once called Donald Trump a "hate preacher," was elected as the country's 12th post-war president on Sunday by a special assembly in Berlin.

Steinmeier, 61, representing the center-left Social Democratic Party, won 931 votes among the 1,239 delegates to the federal assembly, known as the Bundesversammlung, made up of state and federal politicians and celebrities. He will serve a five-year term in the largely ceremonial post.

The election of the usually impeccably mannered diplomat, who spent seven of the last 11 years leading the foreign ministry, marked a setback for Chancellor Angela Merkel and her conservative Christian Democrats, who had failed to agree on their own candidate.

They reluctantly threw their weight behind Steinmeier after criticizing his uncharacteristically sharp comments about Trump, made during the U.S. presidential campaign last year.

Steinmeier, who faced four little-known challengers, is expected to be above politics and suspend his party membership as president.

Still, based on past presidential elections, his victory could give his party a boost going into September's parliamentary election, where Merkel is fighting an unexpectedly tight battle to win a fourth term against a popular new Social Democratic candidate, Martin Schulz.

The German presidential election in 2004 was a harbinger of political change in parliament when Merkel's Christian Democrats, then in opposition, narrowly defeated the candidate from the Social Democratic Party, which had control of the federal government at the time.

A year later, Merkel's Christian Democrats beat the Social Democrats to take back control of the government. Steinmeier later became the country's vice chancellor for two years before being crushed by Merkel when he ran for chancellor in 2009.

"We're living in stormy times, and people are worried," Steinmeier, a highly respected diplomat, said in an acceptance speech to the delegates Sunday. "The world seems to be coming apart at the seams."

His speech made repeated, tacit references to disconcerting changes in U.S. foreign policy expected under Trump.

"If the foundations start to wobble in other places, then we need to be even more determined than ever to support those foundations," he said.

The United States has long been a beacon of democracy and freedom for post-war Germany, a country where the scars of World War II are never far from the surface. As a result of the horrors of the Nazi regime, many Germans have especially sensitive antennae for the vulnerability of democracies in the face of authoritarian leaders, and there has been fear here that Trump could be in that mold.

"The history of our republic is the best argument there is against populism," said Steinmeier. "You'll find the best answers only in democracies."

Steinmeier, who resigned as foreign minister in Merkel's grand coalition government last month to run for the higher office, said he was proud that Germany has emerged as an important bastion for stability and role model for peace around the world in the decades since the end of World War II.

It also has become the temporary home for more than 1 million refugees from Syria and other turbulent regions in recent years.

"Isn't it a wonderful thing that Germany has become an anchor for hope for many people around the world?" said Steinmeier. "We're helping others find the courage — not because everything is perfect here in Germany. No, on the contrary, we've shown that things can get better, we've shown that peace is possible after war."

Russian President Vladimir Putin quickly congratulated Steinmeier and invited him to visit Moscow. Steinmeier last year was openly critically of NATO military maneuvers in eastern Europe, calling them "saber rattling." His party has long advocated a softer approach toward Russia than has Merkel's Christian Democrats.

In 2010, Steinmeier became something of a folk hero for donating one of his two kidneys to his ailing wife.

He takes office March 18. He will succeed Joachim Gauck, a former East German dissident and pastor who decided not to run for a second term.

Steinmeier Elected German President

By Andreas Rinke

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

U.K. Defense Chief, Following Prime Minister, Praises Trump Approach

Michael Fallon said Trump has likely galvanized U.S. and U.K. efforts to strengthen NATO

By Ben Kesling

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Donald Trump's Diplomatic Moderation

As his foreign-policy team takes shape, the president appears to be pulling back from his more unorthodox promises

By Peter Nicholas And Carol E. Lee

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

At FDR's 'Little White House,' A Portrait Of Trump's Starkly Different Worldview

By Patrik Jonsson

Christian Science Monitor, February 12, 2017

When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt gazed out from Dowdell's Knob in April of 1945, he was greeted by a peaceful vista that contrasted, to its very horizon, with a bloodied and broken world.

The four-term president's favorite picnic spot on the crown of Pine Mountain, historians say, helped soothe the guilt of war and, in part, inspired the groundwork for what came afterward – a remarkable stretch of relative world peace, policed by the might, and guided by the vision, of the United States.

Looking out on the same landscape this week, Jim Treadwell, a pseudonym for a local law enforcement officer who asked for anonymity to speak frankly, sees something darker: Danger sneaking through the hardwood groves below – whether Mexican gangs from nearby Columbus, Ga., or liberals moving to the Peach State countryside and making a fuss about protecting the wildlife.

To him, that clear-eyed appreciation of danger – combined with liberal overreaction – sums up the young presidency of Donald Trump.

"I lock the door when I go to bed at night," he says. "That's all Trump wants to do. He wants to lock the door at night, and in the morning he'll unlock it and put the 'open for business' sign back out again."

Mr. Treadwell's analogy echoes a broader sentiment taking root, which critics say diverges from many long-accepted norms in how Americans view and interact with the world. Where Roosevelt moved the country out of its post-World War I isolationism, Mr. Trump has promoted a nationalistic "America first" philosophy built on darker views of "carnage" at home and threats abroad.

The shift comes at "a complex age of turbulence and opportunity," when "Americans are dissatisfied with their government and divided over their country's role in this unsettled world," according to a recent report by RAND Corp., a security consultancy.

In the process, Americans like Treadwell – an independent who says he voted for Democratic Presidents Carter and Clinton – are putting stock in Trump to reassess Roosevelt's legacy of fearless optimism and world leadership.

"There have only been a handful of true 'regime shifts' in American political history, and perhaps the biggest one was FDR," says Brandon Weichert, a geopolitical analyst and founder of the Weichert Report, in Alexandria, Va. "We are seeing one now with Trump. And it does come at a dark time. The elites don't understand this dark vision, because to them the world is great."

"It's important to remember that every president is a product of their times."Two different worldviews

For FDR, that meant engagement.

He championed trade deals that lowered tariffs and helped liberalize global trade. He pushed for United States membership in the World Court. And he played a crucial role in founding the United Nations after World War II.

Roosevelt used his inauguration to proclaim "that the only thing we have to fear is ... fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

In a 1940 fireside chat, Roosevelt exhorted:

There are many among us who closed their eyes, from lack of interest or lack of knowledge; honestly and sincerely thinking that the many hundreds of miles of salt water made the American Hemisphere so remote that the people of North and Central and South America could go on living in the midst of their vast resources without reference to, or danger from, other continents of the world.

At his inauguration, Trump spoke of American "carnage." With his executive powers, Trump has sought to build up America's natural barriers, abandoning the Pacific trade deal, moving toward building a Mexico border wall, and trying to temporarily keep out citizens from seven Muslim-majority nations.Hope and humiliation

Warm Springs was a fount of Roosevelt's hope. He built his rustic "Little White House" here for its healing 82-degree spring.

But today, it also offers a more nuanced picture of Roosevelt – and his connections to Trump. Meriwether County, about an hour south of Atlanta, voted for Trump by 56 percent. And Bob Patterson, the pastor of the Warm Springs First Baptist Church and a life-long Roosevelt buff, has no doubt why Trump's message plays well here: a sense of economic insecurity.

"There's no problem here in Meriwether County that 2,000 jobs wouldn't solve," he says.

Bob Patterson, pastor of the Warm Springs First Baptist Church, talks about Franklin D. Roosevelt in Warm Springs, Ga., on Wednesday.

Scholars note some of the same tendencies in Trump and Roosevelt – both took on the courts, both pushed the boundaries executive authority in the name of national security, and both showed an ability to take advantage of emerging media (radio for Roosevelt, Twitter for Trump). But here in Warm Springs what binds them is their common touch.

As with Roosevelt, a large chunk of Trump's base is self-described "commoners" who feel they have a handshake deal with the president. Indeed, the dapper Hyde Park native made a deep and genuine connection with the "common man" here.

"Trump revived FDR's 'forgotten man,' " says Mr. Patterson. "He reminded a lot of Americans that they have been deprived, left out, and forgotten."

A stark difference, of course, is that Roosevelt entered office with 25 percent unemployment compared with 4.9 percent unemployment today. That's one reason Trump's vision hasn't been more broadly appealing, observers say.

"When FDR talked about a country laid to waste by the Great Depression … he was describing a picture that all Americans were seeing." Today, however, many Americans don't recognize Trump's evocations of a "dark 'American carnage,' " writes Linette Lopez for Business Insider.

But for those who do recognize it, Trump and his senior adviser, Steven Bannon, have activated a mix of Christian apocalyptic thought peppered with a sense of humiliation at the hands of foreigners. As Treadwell, the Georgia cop, says, "We're tired of two things: God being taken out of daily life and being laughed at behind our backs."

While Roosevelt spoke with optimism, Trump has proven masterful at pushing on the "pain points" of shame and humiliation, says Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael D'Antonio, author of "Never Enough: Donald Trump and the Pursuit of Success."

"Roosevelt was worldly and sophisticated enough to have hope, but Trump ... finds no inspiration in the world," he says. "That's why FDR called on people to open their hearts and Trump is calling on them to close them."One view of the 'carnage'

Roy Orlinger looks like any good husband as he patiently waits outside a row of Warm Springs gift shops as his wife shops, eventually emerging with a couple of throw pillows.

The retired Georgia Bureau of Investigation agent recalls flying drug interdiction missions aboard a converted C-130 military plane, chasing drug runners out of the Georgia skies. After one plane dropped duffel bags of cocaine, agents located the cache – along with a cocaine-covered dead bear that had overdosed by licking the sucrose used to cut the drug.

"There is carnage," says Mr. Orlinger, pointing to violence perpetrated by gangs and Mexican drug-runners in cities such as Memphis and Chicago. To him, Trump is looking at the world bluntly and realistically. His embrace of Trump is not a rejection of Roosevelt, he says, but of President Obama, whom he believes "was trying to destroy America from within."

To Orlinger, Trump's deeper point is that patriotism will banish prejudice. "We have to stop looking at race and start looking at each other as brothers and sisters," he says.

That is a key point of Trump's appeal, says Robert McCurtain, a Wall Street analyst who specializes in consumer psychology.

"Like in FDR's day, many [Trump voters] don't view the United States as the cause of problems in the world and they do still believe the USA is a beacon for the oppressed," he says. "The big qualifier could be that they want people who live in the USA to live under and by the rule of law."

To Orlinger and other Trump supporters, a focus on sovereignty isn't a retreat from the world, but a reassessment of America's place in it. After all, as Treadwell muses, "What's wrong with putting America first?"

For Patterson, the pastor, Trump's willingness to fashion a new kind of presidency harks to Roosevelt, as well. The challenges facing the US might not be remotely on the scale of the Great Depression or World War II, but the perception is that they are – and that Trump is addressing that challenge.

"Seriously, FDR should have been impeached, but instead he ended up being one of our greatest presidents," says Patterson. "Perhaps Trump can take that to heart."

Trump's Winning Asia Diplomacy

Promising signs from a call with Xi Jinping and golf with Shinzo Abe.

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

World's Diplomats, Seeking A Bridge To Trump, Eye Haley

By Somini Sengupta

New York Times, February 12, 2017

UNITED NATIONS — The shock is gone. Panic is subsiding. Now, diplomats who represent the nations of the world are entering what one described as the third stage of grief: figuring out how to deal with President Trump.

They're scrambling to speak with his advisers and poring over his Twitter posts — or if they're old school, ordering their minions to print out twice-daily lists of presidential outbursts. They're watching anxiously how he reacts to a series of high-stakes tests (military provocations by Russia in Ukraine, for instance), while trying to parse the contradictory statements coming out of his administration (what exactly is the United States' view on Russia?).

And they're counting on his United Nations envoy, Nikki R. Haley, to be a coolheaded adviser, even as they wonder whether she, his not-so-long-ago critic, has her mercurial boss's ear.

Their doubts surfaced late Friday over the abruptly annulled appointment of a Palestinian leader for a senior United Nations post. Diplomats said they had been led to believe the appointment of the Palestinian, Salam Fayyad, had been approved by all Security Council members — only to be greeted with a last-minute statement from Ms. Haley's office, quashing the appointment. The United States does not recognize Palestine as a state, the statement read, raising questions about whether Ms. Haley had been overridden by the White House.

So far, she has revealed little of her world views, except an opening salvo that did not go down very well among her peers. "For those who don't have our back, we're taking names," she said of America's allies in her first remarks at the United Nations headquarters, and then repurposed it into a hashtag: #TakingNames.

So far on Mr. Trump's watch, Iran and North Korea have carried out ballistic missile tests, Israel has expanded settlements and fighting has escalated between Ukraine and pro-Russia rebels — all regarded as early tests for the White House.

His travel ban on seven Muslim-majority nations has given ballast to the Islamic State, his somersaults on Taiwan are seen to have strengthened China's hand, and his unpleasant exchanges with the leaders of close allies like Mexico and Australia have left many diplomats wondering whether they can count on the world's most powerful nation as a reliable partner.

Mr. Trump's supporters see his edicts and outbursts as perfectly consistent with his campaign promise to upend the establishment, reassert America's primacy and put all on notice not to trifle with him — a kind of chaos theory of foreign-policy management to leave everyone guessing, all the time.

For America's friends in the world, the uncertainty is complicated by not knowing exactly whom to talk to. The warrens of the State Department are unusually empty. Obama administration officials have packed up; new appointments have yet to be made. And a series of contradictory statements have emerged from cabinet officials about crucial issues — not least Russia.

Mr. Trump has continued to express his admiration for his counterpart in the Kremlin, Vladimir V. Putin. Yet Ms. Haley has taken a different posture. In both her confirmation hearing and in her first open remarks in the Security Council, she condemned Russia's "aggressive actions" in Ukraine and insisted that United States sanctions on Moscow would remain.

Several Western envoys breathed a sigh of relief, but not without doubts. Was she speaking for herself, or for the administration? Was the inconsistency deliberate, or did it reflect a lack of consensus? Who is setting United States policy, and whom should they be talking to?

"Unanswerable right now," advised Kathleen Hicks, a Pentagon official under President Barack Obama and now a senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "They're smartest to have multiple points of entry. Backups to backups."

Ms. Haley will have to weigh in on difficult, contentious issues that are already on the United Nations' agenda: how to save South Sudan from what could be a genocide, say, or whether to punish the president of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, for unleashing chemical weapons on his people, or how to stanch the spread of terrorism in West Africa.

Yet she has not expressed opinions on much. On Twitter, she posted selfies with her husband, Michael, and a YouTube video of Billy Joel singing "New York State of Mind." She admitted to being excited to see the movie "Deepwater Horizon," and offered a new hashtag: #WeekendsInNYC.

On the last Sunday of January, as Mr. Trump's travel ban left immigrants and refugees stranded across the world, Ms. Haley wrote a Twitter post about her husband driving up to New York with the family's pets, including two frogs and a fish.

On Saturday night, after North Korea tested a missile, Ms. Haley posted a Twitter message about her admiration for Joan Jett, the 1980s rock star.

What kind of influence she may have on the White House remains unknown. She is far from being a confidante of Mr. Trump's, and it's unclear how much sway she will have over him on any of the big crises facing the world.

"Nikki Haley will be a perfectly normal politician sent to be ambassador," said Eliot A. Cohen, a former Bush administration official. Mr. Trump, he warned, has "instincts and prejudices which are out of the norm of American diplomatic belief and practice."

The diplomatic corps is queuing up to see her — and those who score face time are wasting no time sharing it. "The #SpecialRelationship comes to @UN," the British

FOIA CBP 000865

ambassador, Matthew Rycroft, posted on Twitter, along with a photo of the two of them shoulder to shoulder.

"Very positive meeting," offered the Ukrainian ambassador, Volodymyr Y. Yelchenko, posting a picture of his own.

At a crowded reception one recent evening, one diplomat described the first weeks of the Trump presidency as "surreal," as though he were describing a Luis Buñuel movie. Then he spotted Ms. Haley and deftly snaked through the crowd to introduce himself.

I spoke to more than a dozen diplomats for this article, and nearly all described Ms. Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, as a natural politician and a refreshing contrast to the president. "Cordial," one envoy said. "Businesslike," said another.

"We need to find a way to engage with the new administration, particularly with Ambassador Haley, and to explore with them what we can do together," said João Vale de Almeida, the envoy representing the European Union's 28 member nations. "In doing so, we should try to avoid dangers and pitfalls."

Vitaly I. Churkin, the Russian ambassador and perhaps Ms. Haley's most important colleague on the Council, complimented her "very powerful record" as governor. On Twitter, he said cryptically that he looked forward to working with her according to the "mind-set of their capitals." (Her boss, in Washington, has lavished praise on his, in Moscow.)

Few people at the United Nations need to be on her good list more than the man who heads the world body, António Guterres.

Mr. Trump has dismissed Mr. Guterres's entire operation as a social club. Republicans in Congress have threatened to pull funding. And Ms. Haley has made it clear that she intends to scrutinize how the United Nations spends its money and eliminate things that do not serve United States interests, while also taking pains to say she would not take a "slash and burn" approach.

The United States pays for more than a fifth of the United Nations' core budget, and controls key jobs in the world body's system. So Mr. Guterres must strike a balance between keeping United States officials on board and not being seen as subservient to United States interests.

He faced that challenge over Mr. Trump's travel ban. Mr. Guterres was criticized as not speaking out against it directly enough, quickly enough. Finally, he told reporters that the restrictions "violate our basic principles" and called for them to be discontinued.

Mr. Guterres is a former socialist prime minister of Portugal. Ms. Haley is a conservative from the American South. But both are politicians, as Richard Gowan, a research fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, pointed out. And, he argued, they could help each other — Ms. Haley in prodding him to show that America gets value at the United Nations, Mr. Guterres by using pressure from her to make the reforms he thinks are necessary.

As Mr. Gowan put it in a recent essay, "Their political fortunes are inseparable."

Peru President Asks Trump To Consider Deporting Wanted Ex-leader

By Mitra Taj

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

IMF Head: Trump Good For US Economy For Now As Trouble Looms

By Jon Gambrell

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) – The head of the International Monetary Fund said Sunday that U.S. President Donald Trump taking office is likely good for the American economy in the short term, though rising interest rates and a strengthening dollar will challenge global trade.

Christine Lagarde said Trump's plans for additional investment in U.S. infrastructure and his likely tax reforms will boost America's economic fortunes.

However, Lagarde acknowledged that Trump's policies likely will squeeze international markets.

"That's a tightening that is going to be difficult on the global economy and for which economies have to prepare," Lagarde said during an event at the World Government Summit in Dubai.

Asked how the world missed Trump's rise and the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union, Lagarde described a creeping, "insidious" push toward anti-globalization and protectionist thought.

"We have been saying globalization is great, international trade is great – and it is," she said. "But we have not looked at those who were badly, negatively impacted."

She blamed those negative impacts in part on the rise of robots taking jobs, as well as the shrinking gains of the global middle class.

Lagarde cautiously sidestepped questions on her thoughts about Trump being in the White House by saying "this is really a work in progress – there's been of announcements, a lot of tweets, a lot of things being said."

Still, she stressed the importance of data and facts in making decisions.

"I know it's not fashionable at the moment, but I think that facts, figures (and) actual assessment of the reality matter and that we have to be honest about it," she said.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Hezbollah Leader Says 'Idiot' Trump Makes Him Optimistic

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

BEIRUT (AP) – The leader of Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group says the world will benefit from having an "idiot" in the White House.

Hassan Nasrallah said in a speech Sunday that his group is much stronger than when it was created in the early 1980s and should not be concerned about threats from the West.

Referring to U.S. President Donald Trump, Nasrallah said "we are very optimistic that when an idiot settles in the White House and boasts about his idiocy, this is the beginning of relief for the oppressed around the world."

Trump has vowed to take a stronger stance against Iran, which is a key sponsor of Hezbollah and other militant groups in the Middle East. The White House said Iran was "on notice" after it tested a ballistic missile.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

A Way To Get Real News To Russia

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

A CONFOUNDING aspect of today's global conflicts is the use of soft power: propaganda, news, social media, cybermischief, deception, leaks and other means to influence hearts and minds and thereby prevail over an adversary. The digital age has greatly accelerated the importance and use of these techniques, and Russia has demonstrated a dark mastery of them, especially since its invasion of Ukraine three years ago. How should the West respond, and, more broadly, how can free and open societies answer propaganda from authoritarian regimes? Should America stoop to the same behavior? Or should free societies just hope that their existing news and social media will be a sufficient bulwark against the tide of falsehood and deliberate confusion?

An intriguing and important U.S. attempt at an answer was formally launched last week . Current Time television, a product of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Voice of America, is a 24/7 Russian-language television network based in Prague and aimed at audiences inside Russia as well as the borderlands of the former Soviet Union. The content of Current Time is intended to provide "fair and accurate reporting, serving as a reality check on disinformation that is driving conflict in the region," the network said. In other words, this is an attempt to beam straight talk into countries where state-backed propaganda is far more prevalent.

Russians get a large share of their news from television, and the state has an outsized role in controlling and running most broadcast and cable channels. (The online, independent TV Dozhd is an exception.) But Russians also flock to social media, where they can see Current Time video, which will also be available on a website or by satellite. Outside Russia, from the Baltics to Central Asia, there are millions more potential viewers, and many of them have had no Russian-language alternatives to Moscow's TV broadcasting. They should welcome the straight talk.

Both organizations behind Current Time are funded by the U.S. government. The staffs of both VOA and RFE/RL are made up of professional journalists. They do not want to be U.S. propaganda tools, and they envision a television product that is fact-based and unflinching. A key to the success of Current Time will be whether the reports will be deemed credible by audiences that have been fed a steady diet of anti-Americanism in recent years. Breaking through to these viewers is a worthy goal, but it won't be easy.

The Trump administration can help by keeping its hands off Current Time, avoiding the temptation to turn it into a U.S. propaganda machine. The idea is not to replicate well-funded Russian disinformation outlets such as RT and Sputnik. For its part, Congress has for some time been asking for a more robust answer to Russia's information war. This is one attempt, using real news and straight programming and reflecting the highest and best values of our open society. Congress ought to make sure it is properly financed and politically unhindered.

Trump's New Start With Russia May Prove Better Than Obama's

The new president's reported disdain for his predecessor's arms deal is an encouraging sign.

By John Bolton

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Romanians Step Up Protests Again To Urge Government To Quit

By Andra Timu

Bloomberg Politics, February 12, 2017

Thousands of Romanians took to the streets of major cities once again, indicating the embattled government may have to do more to dim the biggest demonstrations since the fall of communism.

More than 70,000 people demanding the cabinet to step down rallied around Romania on Sunday, with some 50,000 of them in front of the government building in Bucharest, local media reported. Protests stretched into a 13th consecutive day, even as numbers had dwindled during the previous few days. In an attempt to stem the anger, Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu has reversed controversial legal measures seen as damaging to anti-graft efforts and Justice Minister Florin Iordache later quit.

A little over a month since returning to power, Romania's Social Democrats face the largest backlash since the 1989 uprising that ousted dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. The fury erupted after the passage of measures to ease punishment for corrupt officials and release others from prison. Nationwide protests of as many as 600,000 prompted the government to change course. The demonstrators back an anti-graft drive that's ensnared top officials in the European Union and NATO member nation, including an ex-Social Democrat premier.

"There's clearly anger inside society that's channeled toward corrupt politicians and corruption in general," said Paul Ivan, a Brussels-based analyst at the European Policy Center. "In the last four-five years, we've seen results from the anti-corruption fight and reforms have been pushed through and this has built up hope the country can do better and can be cleaner."

Grindeanu, whose government survived a no-confidence motion Tuesday in parliament, has pledged greater transparency from his cabinet. President Klaus Iohannis has slammed the ruling coalition for the crisis. After plummeting initially, the leu has recovered as the cabinet softened its stance.

Corruption Crusader Stirs Romania

Government's resistance to prosecutor's anticorruption drive has sparked Romania's biggest protests since the fall of Communism

By Drew Hinshaw

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Anger And Mistrust Fuel Unabated Protests In Romania

By Kit Gillet

New York Times, February 12, 2017

BUCHAREST, Romania — Exactly one week after the largest protests in a quarter of a century rocked Romania, an estimated 70,000 demonstrators filled the square outside the main government building in Bucharest on Sunday evening, determined to show those in power that the crisis was far from over.

While significantly less than the half a million who took to the streets across the country the previous Sunday, the Bucharest demonstration was still a potent sign of the resilient unrest in the country and the loss of trust between the new government, only in office since the beginning of January, and a large sector of the population.

Sunday was the 13th night in a row that protesters occupied Piata Victoriei — Victory Square — in Bucharest, after the government passed an emergency ordinance on Jan. 31 that effectively decriminalized some low-level corruption offenses, including cases of official misconduct in which the financial damage was less than 200,000 lei, or about $47,000. Protests have also taken place in more than 50 towns and cities across the country.

In the face of the large-scale backlash, the emergency ordinance was repealed a week ago, but that has not stopped protesters from demonstrating their anger.

Many in the square on Sunday continued to call for the resignation of Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu, as well as the presidents of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, among the highest political offices in the country.

"We don't trust this government. They lied to us. We want this government to resign," said Maria Stoica, 38, an information-technology business analyst standing in the square. For her, it was the 10th night of protesting.

The Romanian government had hoped that it had weathered the worst of the crisis. On Wednesday it easily survived a no-confidence motion brought about by the parliamentary opposition. One day later, the prime minister accepted the resignation of Florin Iordache, the minister of justice and one of the architects of the emergency ordinance that was the catalyst for the protests.

However, Mr. Iordache's resignation appears to have done little to appease those on the street.

"They promised one thing, but did another," said Vlad Puiu, 41, a retail manager. "We are here to make sure what happened won't happen again."

After several days where it seemed as if the protests may have been waning, with nightly crowds diminishing to a few thousand in the face of falling temperatures, the turnout on Sunday was a strong signal that the government may have miscalculated.

At exactly 9 p.m. local time, tens of thousands of Romanians, using pieces of colored paper and the lights from their cellphones, created a vast Romanian flag across the square. Temperatures hovered around 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

According to Florin Badita, 28, an activist who has helped rally people through a Facebook group he created

FOIA CBP 000868

after a deadly nightclub fire in 2015 — a disaster partly blamed on corruption — the protests are far from over.

"This won't be the last night. We haven't won anything yet. If we don't go out now we'll need to in six months, when there's the next big thing," he said.

Mr. Badita, who took unpaid leave from his job in the northern city of Cluj to participate in the Bucharest protests, said he also believed the momentum would grow.

"I think the main thing is that now people know that there are a lot of people wanting change," he said. "What we want to do is build this in a sustainable way, and also to train citizens in things like the Freedom of Information Act. We can go out all the time to protest, but we need to do more."

Others also said that they saw the potential for these protests to develop into a more long-term movement.

"The success of these protests, resulting in the withdrawal of the ordinance, has boosted the most active of the protesters in their commitment to a more sustained and permanent kind of organization," said Sergiu Miscoiu, a professor of political science at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj.

"This involves maybe only a quarter or even a tenth of last Sunday's demonstrators, but it will be enough to put pressure on the government," he said.

After Gun Battle In Kashmir, Protests Turn Violent

By Hari Kumar

New York Times, February 12, 2017

NEW DELHI — Indian security forces in Kashmir engaged in an intense, 12-hour-long gun battle with militants that ended late Sunday morning, leaving four militants, two soldiers and one civilian dead, the authorities said. An additional civilian died after a protest.

The police had learned that the militants were in a village, and cordoned it off late Saturday. They were conducting searches when they were fired upon by militants; security forces began firing back.

The violence then led to clashes between Indian security forces and large crowds of local youths who gathered to mourn the dead militants.

The police used tear gas on protesters, who were pelting stones at the Indian forces. They also fired bullets and birdshot at protesters, injuring at least 21 people, one of whom later died, according to Dr. Abdul Majid, the medical superintendent of the district government hospital at Anantnag.

The four militants, all residents of Kashmir and all in their 20s, were members of the rebel group Hizbul Mujahedeen, said Sridhar Patil, the police chief of Kulgam district. He said they had criminal charges, including murder and stealing arms from security forces, outstanding against them.

"First we tried to convince them to surrender with the help of locals and family members," Mr. Patil said, but they shouted back that they would not surrender.

Security forces recovered three assault rifles and two pistols from the site, Mr. Patil said.

Throngs of youths fought with Indian forces last summer in Kulgam. The disturbances began in July, when Indian security forces killed Burhan Wani, a top commander for Hizbul Mujahedeen. Sunday's fight in Kulgam ended a lull of several months.

Insurgents in Kashmir have been fighting for independence from India for nearly three decades, and the Indian authorities have long said that their movement is supported by Pakistan. Diplomatic ties between the two countries have frayed in recent years.

Somaliland Agrees To UAE Military Base In Northern Port

By Abdi Guled

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) – Somalia's breakaway northern territory of Somaliland has said the United Arab Emirates can establish a military base in its territory.

The Emirati government in January submitted a formal application seeking permission from the Somaliland government to open a military base in the port town of Berbera.

The parliament of Somaliland on Sunday approved the UAE plan. The plan is controversial and the neighboring countries of Ethiopia and Djibouti are opposed to it, according to local reports.

In Sunday's vote 144 lawmakers were in favor of the military base, two voted against and two abstained. Nine others opposed to the base shouted against President Ahmed Silanyo and were led out of the chamber by soldiers. Silanyo had spoken in favor of the base, saying it would create jobs in Somaliland.

The UAE government is planning to establish a naval base with warships that would be used to attack Shia Houthi fighters fighting the government in Yemen, according to a Somaliland official who insisted on anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the press.

Speaking at the parliament session, Somaliland's president said that the military base would benefit Somaliland most and help create jobs.

The plan follows a multimillion dollar, 30-year contract for UAE's international ports operator, DP World, to manage Somaliland's largest port, Berbera.

The former British protectorate of Somaliland declared a unilateral independence from the rest of Somalia in 1991

and has succeeded in establishing peace and stability. But no country has so far recognized it as an independent state.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

IMF's Stand On Greek Bailout Unnerves Europe

Some worry about prolonged deadlock as new debt crisis emerges

By Simon Nixon

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Top Opposition Leader In Cambodia Resigns As Election Nears

By Julia Wallace

New York Times, February 12, 2017

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — The embattled leader of Cambodia's main opposition party abruptly quit on Saturday in the face of increasing government pressure, ceding a political stage he had occupied for more than two decades.

The resignation of the leader, Sam Rainsy, came after the government began a series of moves that would allow it to dissolve the Cambodia National Rescue Party he led, in advance of crucial local elections set for June. The opposition has also been hit with a barrage of lawsuits and leaked telephone conversations between leading figures and women purported to be their mistresses.

It was unclear whether Mr. Sam Rainsy, 67, was leaving politics for good or was planning to work quietly behind the scenes. Either way, his exit seemed to represent the end of an era.

As the head of three liberal-leaning political parties since 1995, he had been a thorn in the side of the country's long-ruling prime minister, Hun Sen, for more than 20 years.

In an interview on Sunday from Paris, where he has lived in exile since November 2015, Mr. Sam Rainsy. a French-educated former banker, said he had quit as a "pre-emptive defensive move" to save his political party.

This month, Mr. Hun Sen proposed a measure that could dissolve any party led by someone convicted of a crime, which Mr. Sam Rainsy has been many times, because of an abundance of criminal defamation suits filed against him by government officials, government allies and the prime minister himself.

"This guy is crazy," Mr. Sam Rainsy said of Mr. Hun Sen. "He can do anything he wants without consideration for legal, judicial principles, so I have to defend my party and tell Hun Sen and tell the Cambodian people and tell the whole world that Hun Sen no longer has any grounds to dissolve the C.N.R.P. on the basis that his kangaroo court has made me a convict."

He was vague about his political future.

"In politics, there are always ups and downs," he said. "Things can change."

Ou Virak, the chairman of the Future Forum, a public policy research group in Phnom Penh, the capital, said the departure of Mr. Sam Rainsy was a blow for Cambodia's fledgling democracy.

"Leaving in this kind of situation, when the party is under pressure, is not ideal or democratic," he said. "It highlights the nature of Cambodian politics for the past 20 or so years. Politics is not created by competition and ideas, but personalities and maneuvering to get what people want."

Mr. Sam Rainsy was one of those personalities. Despite his weaknesses, including a tendency to flee the country in the face of trouble, he is still, for many, the most enduring symbol of opposition to Mr. Hun Sen. The prime minister, a former Khmer Rouge fighter, has held power since 1985 and maintains close control over almost all of the country's institutions.

"Rainsy is a character with a lot of flaws, but it has to be recognized that he has maintained this position of opposition for nearly a quarter-century," said Sebastian Strangio, the author of the book "Hun Sen's Cambodia." "At any time, he could have sold out to the C.P.P. and become a rich man," he said, referring to the Cambodian People's Party, led by Mr. Hun Sen.

Mr. Sam Rainsy, while clearly irritating the prime minister, proved useful over the years by presenting an internationally visible opposition figure to run in elections, which Mr. Hun Sen always won, Mr. Strangio added.

But Mr. Sam Rainsy began to pose a more existential threat to Mr. Hun Sen's political survival when he formed a partnership with another government critic, Kem Sokha, in 2012. Their new political party nearly won the 2013 national election, emboldening them and stunning the C.P.P.

Mr. Hun Sen and Mr. Sam Rainsy came to a brief rapprochement in 2014 and 2015, with the opposition leader extracting some important political concessions from Mr. Hun Sen, including equal representation on the National Election Committee and a television broadcasting license.

But a few months later, the friendly feelings dissolved, and many of the concessions were rescinded.

It has been hard to keep up with the number of lawsuits filed against Mr. Sam Rainsy and other opposition figures over the last 18 months, many involving allegations of criminal defamation against government officials.

Salacious telephone conversations involving Mr. Kem Sokha and other opposition lawmakers have also been leaked online and discussed widely in government-friendly news media. The most recent recording, released a week ago, involved a man who sounded like Mr. Sam Rainsy bantering with a waitress about her eating and bathing habits.

Mr. Sam Rainsy's moral authority was also being eroded from within his party. While he fled the country in November 2015 to avoid jail time, Mr. Kem Sokha made a point of staying after being charged with crimes related to a suspected affair. Eventually, the government pardoned him.

Mr. Kem Sokha is now set to become the acting opposition leader. In a statement on Sunday, he called Mr. Sam Rainsy's decision honorable and said it had been made in discussion with the party's leadership.

Phay Siphan, a government spokesman, said the many lawsuits against opposition figures were private matters, and he accused Mr. Sam Rainsy of trying to generate publicity with a dramatic exit.

"He is an opportunist," Mr. Phay Siphan said. "Tell me, so far, in the last 20 years, what has he done for Cambodia except move the people to go on strike and have demonstrations?"

Mr. Phay Siphan also criticized the United States representatives Alan Lowenthal and Steve Chabot, members of a new congressional caucus on Cambodia, for writing to Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson on Feb. 9 about the need to promote free and fair elections in Cambodia.

Mr. Phay Siphan called the representatives "blind" and "ignorant," and he suggested that Mr. Sam Rainsy was taking cues from them.

Mr. Sam Rainsy countered that all he wanted was for his party to survive long enough to run in the elections, with or without him.

"It is Hun Sen who sees me behind any initiative to defend democracy," he said, "but I think Cambodia has many sons, many daughters, who are willing to defend democracy."

Switzerland Votes To Ease Citizenship For 3rd-Generation Immigrants

By Nick Cumming-Bruce

New York Times, February 12, 2017

GENEVA — The posters seen in several cities and provinces featured two very similar young women: both born in Switzerland, educated in Swiss schools, now in their 20s and working full time in Swiss jobs. They even share the given name Vanessa.

The point, though, was the crucial way they differ. One Vanessa is a Swiss citizen, while the other is not, and is locked in a lengthy and expensive procedure to obtain citizenship even though her family put down roots in Switzerland two generations ago.

The posters backed a government-sponsored measure that would ease the path to citizenship for third-generation immigrants like the second Vanessa. And on Sunday, the measure was approved in a nationwide referendum.

The outcome went against the recent tide of right-wing populism and anti-immigrant sentiment in much of Western Europe. Just over 60 percent of votes were in favor, including majorities in 17 of the country's 23 electoral cantons — a minimum of 12 are required to pass — despite a right-wing campaign that sought to stoke fears of Muslims infiltrating the country.

"We are quite surprised," said Stefan Egli, a manager of Operation Libero, a politically independent group that campaigned in support of the initiative and organized the poster campaign featuring the two Vanessas, among others. Mr. Egli said he had thought the referendum would win the national popular vote, but he worried that more of the rural cantons would oppose the change.

Swiss law typically requires foreigners to be resident in the country for 12 years before applying for citizenship; after that they must undergo a series of tests and interviews to assess their suitability, and are judged by criteria that differ from one canton to another. Unlike the United States and some European countries, Switzerland does not grant automatic citizenship to children born on its soil.

The measure approved on Sunday will not change those basic rules, but will speed up and simplify the approval process, using uniform criteria, for foreigners under 25 whose parents and grandparents have permanent residence status in Switzerland. "These are people who are at home," Simonetta Sommaruga, the federal justice minister, said in a statement explaining the government's position on third-generation immigrants. "The only difference is they do not have a red (Swiss) passport."

An assessment by Geneva University for the government's department of migration found that just under 25,000 people could benefit from the changes. Most of them are Italian, it found, and nearly 80 percent are of European extraction.

Vanessa Seyffert, the second woman in the poster, will not be one of them; she is already deep in the process of applying the old way. She said she had taken part in the poster campaign to highlight the inequality facing young people who were brought up attending the same schools and speaking the same language but do not have the same rights. "The crucial thing for me is to be able to vote," Ms. Seyffert said in an interview. "I just want to have a voice."

Noncitizens make up one-quarter of Switzerland's eight million residents, one of the highest proportions in Europe, and the continent's refugee crisis has sharpened fears in the country of a dilution of national culture and character. Changes to the country's restrictive immigration laws, even modest ones like the referendum on Sunday, tend to touch a

nerve. Given the climate, proponents said they saw almost no chance of enacting broader changes, like automatic citizenship for third-generation immigrants, which was defeated in a 2004 referendum.

"We don't see any reason whatsoever to make it easier," said Luzi Stamm, a legislator from the right-wing People's Party, which favors making controls on foreign workers and migrants even tighter. "The movement of people in the world has increased considerably," he said. "You have an increased probability of problem-makers coming here." To reinforce the point, the party mounted a poster campaign of its own, featuring a silhouette of a woman in a burqa and with the slogan "No to uncontrolled naturalization."

Though the People's Party has a long history of provocative posters and slogans playing on popular suspicion of outsiders, the current posters shocked many Swiss, who saw them as racist and irrelevant to the ballot measure.

"It's quite systematic — they are really trying what Trump's campaigns did, to go beyond the facts," said Lukas Goldber, an analyst at Gfs.bern, a political and social research institute, referring to President Trump's election campaign in the United States.

"Some elements were trying to see if it works in the Swiss system," Mr. Goldber said. "It didn't work at all."

Head Of Spain's Far-Left Party Survives Leadership Challenge

By Raphael Minder

New York Times, February 12, 2017

MADRID — Pablo Iglesias, the head of Spain's far-left Podemos Party, defeated a challenge in a leadership vote on Sunday, giving him a strong mandate to stick with the radical line that has made Podemos one of Europe's main anti-establishment parties.

Mr. Iglesias, 38, won an unexpectedly clear victory, receiving 89 percent of the votes as party leader, while his main supporters won 60 percent of the seats on the party's governing council.

The victory of Mr. Iglesias during a two-day party congress is likely to raise the pressure on the Socialists, Spain's main opposition party, to resolve a bitter leadership dispute of their own. The Socialists have been functioning under a caretaker management since ousting their leader, Pedro Sánchez, last October, which then helped clear the way for Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, a conservative, to win re-election.

Founded in 2014 during a period of extreme discontent and record unemployment generated by the world financial crisis, Podemos made a meteoric rise that also uprooted Spain's two-party system. But after coming in third in its first general elections in late 2015, Podemos found it harder to switch from anti-austerity street protests to parliamentary politics and lost votes in repeat elections six months later.

The party was then plunged into an internal dispute, not only over the leadership of Mr. Iglesias, but also over whether Podemos should adhere to his anti-institutional hard-line policies or instead steer more toward conciliatory and mainstream politics — as advocated by the party's deputy leader, Iñigo Errejón. The struggle came at a time when Spain's return to economic growth was also helping reduce unemployment.

Mr. Rajoy was re-elected unopposed as leader of his Popular Party during the weekend. While Mr. Rajoy remains in a fragile situation at the helm of a minority government, his most pressing challenge has come from Catalonia, where separatist politicians have pledged to hold a referendum in September over whether to split from Spain. Mr. Rajoy told party supporters on Sunday that he would firmly oppose such a referendum and not compromise with Catalonia over its independence ambitions. "All this secessionist process is a folly," Mr. Rajoy said.

NATIONAL NEWS

Republicans, Aiming To Kill Health Law, Also Work To Shore It Up

By Robert Pear

New York Times, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — After denouncing the Affordable Care Act as an abomination for seven years, Republicans in Congress, working with the Trump administration, are urgently seeking ways to shore up health insurance marketplaces created by the law.

While President Trump said as a candidate that "Obamacare is certain to collapse of its own weight," Republicans fear such an outcome because, now that the fate of the health law is in their hands, they could be blamed by consumers and Democrats.

The administration is poised to issue a proposed regulation to try to stabilize insurance markets, and House Republicans are drafting legislation with a similar purpose. The regulation and the bills are intended to hold down insurance premiums and to lure insurers back into the public marketplaces from which they have withdrawn in the past couple of years.

The Republican proposals address concerns that insurers have been expressing for several years, among them what they call costly abuse of special enrollment periods. But markets could still be undermined, insurers say, if Congress simultaneously repeals the health law's requirement for most Americans to have coverage.

That requirement, known as the individual mandate, is one of the more unpopular features of the law, signed in 2010

by President Barack Obama. But insurance companies like it because it requires people to buy their product, bringing in healthy people who pay premiums and do not use much care.

Analyzing the Republican strategy, Joel L. Michaels, a health lawyer at the firm McDermott Will & Emery, said there was "a tension" between efforts to repeal the health law and shore up its insurance marketplaces, where more than 10 million people obtained coverage last year.

"A political agenda premised on the Affordable Care Act being unworkable could conflict with efforts to support the A.C.A. exchanges, even on an interim basis," Mr. Michaels said. "How far do you go with short-term fixes, which could make the law work better in the long term? It's a delicate political dance."

Insurers are seeking immediate governmental action because they must decide by early May what kinds of health plans they will offer on the exchanges in 2018.

The proposed rule drafted by the Trump administration and one of the bills drafted by House Republicans would make it more difficult for consumers to obtain insurance outside the annual open enrollment period. Consumers would have to provide documents to show they were eligible for a special enrollment period. Under existing rules, people can sign up after the deadline if they experience certain "life changes" like having a baby, getting married, losing employer-sponsored insurance or moving to a new state.

But insurers say that some consumers have misused these special enrollment periods, signing up when they became sick and dropping coverage after they received the care they needed.

Insurers say people who sign up in a special enrollment period use up to 50 percent more services than those who sign up in the standard enrollment season.

In documents provided to the White House at a meeting last week, Blue Cross and Blue Shield executives said federal officials should limit the number of special enrollment periods and "require all individuals to show proof of eligibility before coverage starts" — an idea endorsed by several governors.

Gov. Bill Haslam of Tennessee, a Republican, said that "special enrollment periods are an absolute necessity for individuals who experience a change in life circumstance." But, he said, they have been "so broadly defined that they are almost akin to a permanent open enrollment period, allowing individuals to access health insurance benefits only when health care is an immediate necessity."

Judith Solomon, a vice president at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal-leaning research and advocacy group, said she had not seen convincing evidence of abuse.

Moreover, she said, the documentation requirements "will decrease enrollment, for sure, and will disproportionately deter younger and healthier people" from trying to sign up.

Under another Republican proposal, it would be easier for insurers to terminate coverage for people who fail to pay their premiums. The Affordable Care Act says insurers generally must allow a three-month grace period before ending coverage for people who receive federal subsidies to help pay premiums.

About 85 percent of people who obtain insurance through the Affordable Care Act's marketplaces receive such subsidies, and the three-month grace period is longer than that typically required by state laws.

Under a bill introduced last month by Representative Bill Flores, Republican of Texas, the federal government would recognize any grace period set by state law, and if a state did not have a law, the grace period would be one month.

Several governors, including Brian Sandoval of Nevada and Gary R. Herbert of Utah, both Republicans, endorsed this change. "Reducing the grace period from 90 days to 30 days, which is standard industry practice for most other insurance products, would assist in stabilizing the individual market," Mr. Herbert said.

Republicans in Congress are also warming to the idea of continuing payments to insurance companies to help cover the out-of-pocket costs for people with low incomes.

House Republicans filed suit against the Obama administration to stop these payments, saying Congress never appropriated money for them, and a federal district judge ruled for the lawmakers in May.

The payments reimburse insurers for certain discounts they are required to provide to low-income people, and without the payments, which are expected to total $9 billion this year, insurers say they would drop out of the market or sharply increase premiums.

Representative Mark Meadows, a conservative Republican from North Carolina and a fierce critic of the health care law, said he wanted to avoid disrupting coverage for consumers while Republicans repeal the law and devise a replacement.

"As long as we have a real repeal and replacement strategy," Mr. Meadows said, he might accept a temporary continuation of the cost-sharing subsidies.

"I would be more flexible and could swallow some short-term heartburn for longer-term fiscal responsibility and lower health care costs for the people I represent," he said.

Senator Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee and the chairman of the Senate health committee, said he, too, was willing to allow a "temporary continuation of cost-sharing subsidies for deductibles and co-payments."

After Angry Demonstration In Utah, Chaffetz Returns To More Wrath In D.C.

By Paul Schwartzman

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

Rep. Jason Chaffetz is not yielding.

When he gavels in his House committee Monday night, the Utah Republican will begin the rare act of dismantling a D.C. law — one that allows for assisted suicide — despite the wrath of District residents who are planning a massive "Hands off D.C." rally and accuse him of bullying the city to pander to his conservative base.

Chaffetz, chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, faced another horde of protesters at a town hall in his Utah district last week, though they were irate because of his inaction.

Why, they demanded to know, was he not investigating President Trump's financial dealings? In both cases, Chaffetz said, he would not be swayed by angry crowds, phone calls, emails or tweets.

"It doesn't faze me," the 49-year-old congressman said at an In-N-Out Burger in his Utah district last Thursday, where he devoured a cheeseburger and french fries moments after his security detail whisked him away from the town hall meeting filled with protesters chanting "Do your job!"

"It's a very, very small minority," he said between sips of a chocolate shake. "It's a very vocal, very frustrated, scorched-earth mentality that's not representative of the average person, certainly not in Utah. It might be in San Francisco or Seattle but not here. Not in middle America."

Instead of Trump, Chaffetz's targets these days include the District, where he also wants to block the city's plan to use local tax dollars to help undocumented residents fight deportation. Two weeks ago, he said the best way for the District to gain a vote in Congress would be to rejoin Maryland, a suggestion that infuriated District activists.

Chaffetz, a Mormon who says he is morally opposed to assisted suicide, contends he is fulfilling his responsibility to oversee the District and brushed off any suggestion that he's catering to conservative voters.

"Everything I do isn't because of politics," he said. "I do it because it's right."

Eight years after joining Congress, Chaffetz relishes his role at the center of Washington's rollicking vortex. A ubiquitous presence on cable news shows, the congressman is the GOP's ever-ready flamethrower, using his committee perch to not only meddle in the District's affairs but to savage the IRS and Secret Service, and lambaste former secretary of state Hillary Clinton for the Benghazi attack and her use of a private email server.

Yet, since the election, Chaffetz's refusal to aim his committee at Trump's financial web has fed accusations that the congressman is unwilling to take on his party's leader. Not even his public chiding late last week of White House counselor Kellyanne Conway for promoting Ivanka Trump's clothing line could quell the criticism.

While he was critical of Trump during the campaign, rescinding his endorsement at one point, Chaffetz now crows about the president. After their White House meeting last week, the congressman described Trump's "natural curiosity" as "refreshing," and said that "he was very calm, very nice," and that "it was a thrill to be there."

Chaffetz has repeatedly insisted that he won't lead a "fishing expedition" on Trump, despite what critics — including nonpartisan watchdogs — contend is ample material.

"Very conveniently, this great advocate and apostle for vigorous oversight of the executive branch announced that maybe it was time to put more energy into reform and not oversight," said Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-Va.), a member of the House committee that Chaffetz chairs.

The Republican congressman is frustrated by criticism that he is kowtowing to Trump, a sentiment expressed in a recent Salt Lake Tribune cartoon which rendered the president as Jabba the Hutt, holding a miniature Chaffetz in his palm.

"I'm with him," Chaffetz says in the cartoon, beneath the words, "Republicans refuse to investigate Trump's shady dealings."

Between visits with lawmakers at the state capitol in Salt Lake City last Thursday, Chaffetz called aides in Washington, pushing them to finalize a letter condemning Conway that he and Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-Md.) sent to the Office of Government Ethics.

"Let's get it out now," Chaffetz insisted, before composing his own tweet to his 225,000 Twitter followers that described Conway as "wrong, wrong, wrong," accompanied by a hashtag of "#Donteverdothis."

Moments later, he bristled as he read on his phone a conservative blogger's post in the Washington Post that congressional Republicans are not committed to oversight.

"What the crap is this?" he asked. "They wanted me to investigate Trump even before he was sworn in. Really? Come on."

In addition to his criticism of Conway, he said, his committee is examining the Trump Organization's Old Post Office lease with the General Services Administration. During the campaign, he reminds audiences, he criticized Trump for not releasing his tax returns.

Chaffetz, who is "leaning toward" a 2020 campaign for governor, voiced no concern over support in his overwhelmingly Republican district, which extends from just south of Salt Lake City to the state's southern border. "I'm very reflective of my district," he said, noting that he has won all his elections by massive margins.

Yet Republicans in Chaffetz's district said they are concerned about the president's potential conflicts of interest.

"The jury is still out on Chaffetz," Jeff Nilson, an accountant who has voted for the congressman, said as he

FOIA CBP 000874

waited on line to enter his town hall. "If he challenges him, good for you Jason. Trump has to be answerable for what he does."

During the recent Republican retreat in Philadelphia, Chaffetz and his wife, Julie, met Trump backstage, an encounter the congressman shared with a photo he posted for his 16,000 Instagram followers.

"'I'm the president, you have a job to do,'" Chaffetz said Trump told him. "You do the oversight. You don't slow down. You go after everything you want to go after.'"

Chaffetz described Trump's message as "inspiring," even as he batted away Democratic members' demands that the committee investigate whether Trump was violating the Constitution's "Emoluments Clause," which bars presidents from receiving payments from foreign entities.

Chaffetz also has refused to probe Trump's potential conflicts-of-interest, saying that federal law exempts the president from such violations. "To dive into somebody's personal records hoping to find something is not something we have done," he said.

While Democrats accused Chaffetz of partisanship, Tom Davis, the former Republican congressman from Virginia who chaired the oversight committee, said that "reality" dictates that "you tend to over investigate the other party and you under investigate your own."

"You protect your quarterback, you go after the other guy--that's always the way it has been," Davis said.

Yet Norman J. Ornstein, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, said that ignoring Trump's foreign ties "is a highly partisan and utterly irresponsible act."

Chaffetz became the committee's chairman in 2015, seven years after he won his seat defeating a Republican incumbent with a tea party fueled campaign. He made an early impression eschewing earmarks and insisting on sleeping in his Capitol Hill office on a cot that he lugged from Utah.

The congressman still sleeps on the cot, which he stores in a closet along with beef jerky he buys at a Costco in Virginia. His experience in the city is relatively limited. He identified Chinatown as among his favorite neighborhoods "because they have a Five Guys."

From early in his congressional career, Chaffetz opposed progressive District initiatives such as gay marriage and legalizing marijuana, stances that help him maintain high ratings from conservative interest groups.

In recent weeks, District activists have flooded phone lines at Chaffetz's offices with complaints. D.C. Council members have mocked his interest in District laws and policies by inviting him to their oversight hearings and calling his office to report problems with garbage pick up.

"I would deem him the king of the hypocrites," said Josh Burch of Neighbors United for DC Statehood. "He is a small federal government conservative until it comes to the District of Columbia."

Chaffetz said the Constitution requires that his committee weigh in on District matters, including what he considers profound issues such as assisted suicide, which he refers to as "killing people." "I did not go to Congress thinking I would take on death with dignity, but that's what they put on my plate," he said.

In interviews in his Utah district, Chaffetz's constituents expressed vague awareness of his involvement in D.C. affairs, and said they could understand residents objecting to congressional intervention. Yet Gordon Larsen, 62, a retired coal minor who lives 100 miles south of Provo, said he would not fault Chaffetz for "standing up for the morals he has."

A garrulous pol, his smile framed by dimples, Chaffetz has shown he is unafraid of combat, even when it requires turning on allies. In 2012, he endorsed Mitt Romney for president over his own mentor, former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman.

Three years later, Chaffetz surprised congressional colleagues when he unsuccessfully ran against his "good friend" Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy for House speaker. "We need a speaker who can speak," Chaffetz said, a not-so-subtle dig at McCarthy's propensity for mangling sentences.

McCarthy's defenders included Huntsman, who tweeted: "McCarthy just got 'Chaffetzed.' Something I know a little something about. #selfpromoter #powerhungry."

During the presidential race, Chaffetz targeted Clinton private emails, a probe he announced on Instagram that he wasn't relinquishing when he posted a photograph of himself shaking her hand at Trump's inauguration.

"I thanked her for her service and wished her luck. The investigation continues," he wrote, a message that outraged Democrats who said it was evidence of the congressman's viciousness.

"It wasn't as sensitive as I probably could've been," Chaffetz acknowledged, though he also added that "factually, those sentences are correct." He also made sure to point out that the post was among his most popular.

In recent weeks, Chaffetz said, a woman he encountered on the street in Washington and said, "I hope you will investigate Donald Trump with the same exuberance and intensity that you investigated Hillary."

"I understand," the congressman told her. "I think we'll make you proud."

White House Declines To Publicly Defend Embattled Flynn

By Jill Colvin

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) – A top White House aide sidestepped repeated chances Sunday to publicly defend

embattled national security adviser Michael Flynn following reports that he engaged in conversations with a Russian diplomat about U.S. sanctions before Trump's inauguration.

The uncertainty comes as Trump is dealing with North Korea's apparent first missile launch of the year and his presidency, along with visits this week from the leaders of Israel and Canada.

Trump has yet to comment on the allegations against Flynn, and a top aide dispatched to represent the administration on the Sunday news shows skirted questions on the topic, saying it was not his place to weigh in on the "sensitive matter."

Pressed repeatedly, top policy adviser Stephen Miller said it wasn't up to him to say whether the president retains confidence in Flynn.

"It's not for me to tell you what's in the president's mind," he said on NBC. "That's a question for the president."

The White House said in an anonymous statement Friday the president had full confidence in Flynn. But officials have been mum since then amid fallout from reports that Flynn addressed U.S. sanctions against Russia in a phone call late last year. The report, which first appeared in The Washington Post, contradicted both Flynn's previous denials, as well as those made by Vice President Mike Pence in a televised interview.

Trump has been discussing the situation with associates, according to a person who spoke with him recently. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

New Jersey's Gov. Chris Christie, who led Trump's transition planning before the election, said Flynn would have to explain his conflicting statements about his conversations with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak to Trump and Vice President Mike Pence.

"Gen. Flynn has said up to this point that he had not said anything like that to the Russian ambassador. I think now he's saying that he doesn't remember whether he did or not," Christie said on CNN. "So, that's a conversation he is going to need to have with the president and the vice president to clear that up, so that the White House can make sure that they are completely accurate about what went on."

The comments came as the White House continues to weigh its options following a legal blow last week to Trump's immigration order suspending the nation's refugee program and barring citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S.

Miller, who was one of the architects of the order, maintained in a round of Sunday show interviews that the president has sweeping executive authority when it comes to barring foreigners he deems pose a risk to the country. He said Trump will do "whatever we need to do, consistent with the law, to keep this country safe" and slammed judges who've stood in his way.

"This is a judicial usurpation of the power. It is a violation of judges' proper roles in litigating disputes. We will fight it," Miller said in an interview on "Fox News Sunday."

As for the administration's next steps, Miller said that "all options" remain on the table," including a Supreme Court appeal. Trump said on the plane ride to Florida on Friday that he was considering signing a "brand new order" as early as Monday to try to bypass the legal challenges.

"As you know, we have multiple options, and we are considering all of them," Miller said on ABC's "This Week."

The comments come amid an outcry from immigration activists over an "enforcement surge" by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers that officials say is targeting immigrants who are in the country illegally and have criminal records.

Advocacy groups contend the government has rounded up large numbers of people as part of stepped-up enforcement. The agency calls the effort no different from enforcement actions carried out in the past.

But Trump and Miller appeared eager to take credit for the action.

"The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!" Trump tweeted.

Added Miller on NBC's "Meet the Press": "We're going to focus on public safety and saving American lives and we will not apologize.".

Trump has spent the weekend in Florida at his sprawling Mar-a-Lago estate, holding meetings, making calls, golfing and hosting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

For most of Saturday, Trump and the Japanese prime minister played golf under the Florida sun to get to know one another and show the world the U.S.-Japan alliance remained strong. A surprise provocation by the North Koreans provided a more significant example of cooperation.

After North Korea reportedly launched a ballistic missile, the two leaders appeared for hastily prepared statements in a ballroom of Trump's south Florida estate late Saturday. Abe spoke first and longest.

"North Korea's most recent missile launch is absolutely intolerable," Abe said through a translator. He added that the North must comply fully with relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions, but also noted that Trump had assured him that the U.S. supported Japan.

"President Trump and I myself completely share the view that we are going to promote further cooperation between the two nations. And also we are going to further reinforce our alliance," he said.

Trump followed Abe with even fewer words, saying in part: "I just want everybody to understand and fully know that the United States of America stands behind Japan, its great ally, 100 percent." With that, they left the room.

FOIA CBP 000876

Miller said on ABC that the joint appearance marked "an important show of solidarity between the United States and Japan."

White House Correspondent Julie Pace contributed to this report from Washington.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

As Flynn Falls Under Growing Pressure Over Russia Contacts, Trump Remains Silent

By Philip Rucker, Adam Entous And Ed O'Keefe

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

White House national security adviser Michael Flynn is under increasing political pressure and risks losing the confidence of some colleagues following reports that he misled senior administration officials about his discussion of sanctions with a Russian envoy shortly before President Trump took office.

As White House aides scramble to get their stories straight about the exact nature of those communications and as Democrats call for Flynn's security clearance to be suspended or revoked, neither Trump nor his advisers have publicly defended Flynn or stated unequivocally that he has the president's confidence.

Privately, some administration officials said that Flynn's position has weakened and support for him has eroded largely because of a belief that he was disingenuous about Russia and therefore could not be fully trusted going forward.

"The knives are out for Flynn," said one administration official who, like others interviewed for this report, spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to speak candidly.

On Sunday, the top White House aide dispatched to represent the administration on the political talk shows pointedly declined to defend Flynn.

Asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" whether the president had confidence in Flynn, senior policy adviser Stephen Miller said he did not know.

"It's not for me to tell you what's in the president's mind," Miller told moderator Chuck Todd. He added that his colleagues at the White House "did not give me anything to say" about Flynn.

When ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos asked Miller about Flynn's interactions with Sergey Kislyak, Russia's ambassador to the United States, Miller said, "I don't have any news to make . . . today on this point."

The Washington Post revealed last week that Flynn and Kislyak had discussed U.S. sanctions against Russia in the month before Trump's inauguration.

The Post's finding, confirmed by nine current and former U.S. officials, contrasted with the assurances made publicly by Vice President Pence and other top administration officials that Flynn never talked about sanctions with Russian officials.

Based on Flynn's private assurances, Pence, White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus and White House press secretary Sean Spicer stated publicly that Flynn never discussed sanctions with Kislyak.

Pence spoke to Flynn twice on Friday — once face to face and once by telephone, according to an administration official who declined to characterize the contents of those discussions.

"Flynn is running out of friends, no question," a different administration official said. "The broad consensus in the White House is that he lied. The vice president feels like he lied. In a position that needs to be no drama, it's nonstop drama. I would be very surprised if he lasts much longer."

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (R), an informal adviser to Trump, called on Flynn to "clear up" what happened with Trump and Pence, but he stopped short of accusing him of wrongdoing.

"I think that's the obligation of General Flynn, his national security adviser, to have those type of candid conversations with the president and the vice president," Christie said on CNN. "And then they will act as they see fit, given all the circumstances."

Over the weekend at Trump's Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Fla., the president privately voiced frustration with Flynn and the political baggage he is hanging on the White House, according to two people familiar with his comments.

Spicer denied that Trump criticized Flynn to anyone at the club and called assertions to the contrary "fake news."

People close to Flynn said he feels confident in his position despite the swirling controversy. He flew to Florida this weekend with the president along with other National Security Council officials to engage with his Japanese counterparts during Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit.

Furthermore, people in Trump's orbit cautioned that the president was unlikely to fire Flynn because doing so would amount to an admission of guilt and misjudgment in the face of media scrutiny and would also demonstrate chaos early in his presidency.

The doubts about the national security adviser come as Trump faces his first significant provocation from a U.S. adversary overseas. North Korea fired a ballistic missile over the weekend, a move suspected by some experts as designed to serve as a test of components of an

intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the United States.

Trump responded on Saturday night in a joint appearance with Abe at Mar-a-Lago, where he reassured his Japanese counterpart that the United States fully supported Japan.

Flynn, a retired lieutenant general and a decorated intelligence officer, met Trump in late 2015 to offer advice about his campaign and signed on with Trump the following year. He won Trump's approval during the general election with his willingness to travel regularly and deliver fiery stump speeches trashing Trump's Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton.

Democratic leaders have called for investigations into the Flynn's contact with Russian officials and for Trump to suspend and revoke Flynn's security clearance.

"President Trump's kowtowing to Vladimir Putin is endangering our national security and emboldening a dangerous tyrant," House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said Saturday.

Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (Md.), the top Democrat on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, said Sunday on ABC News that suspending Flynn's clearance would be "an appropriate action."

Trump has not yet issued a comment about Flynn, either on Twitter or in one of his brief appearances before journalists over the weekend. Aboard Air Force One on Friday, reporters asked Trump about The Post's report on Flynn's discussion of sanctions and the president claimed he did not know about it, even though it had by then become a major story across cable news.

"I don't know about that. I haven't seen it," Trump said during a flight to Florida from Washington. "What report is that? I haven't seen that. I'll look into that."

Greg Miller contributed to this report.

Democrats Press For Probe Of Security Adviser's Talks With Russians

Top adviser can't say if Trump still has confidence in Mike Flynn

By Donna Borak

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

White House Is Keeping Doubts Alive About The Future Of National Security Advisor Michael Flynn

By David Lauter

Los Angeles Times, February 12, 2017

The ominous silence around the Trump administration's national security advisor, retired Gen. Michael Flynn, deepened Sunday as a senior White House official in a televised interview declined to say if the president still has confidence in him.

"That's the question that I think you should ask the president, the question you should ask Reince [Priebus], the chief of staff," Stephen Miller, the White House senior policy advisor, said on NBC's "Meet the Press" when asked if Trump still has confidence in Flynn.

"So the White House did not give you anything to say," asked the show's host, Chuck Todd.

"They did not give me anything to say," Miller responded.

Miller's silence on Flynn was significant because the White House had booked him on several of the major Sunday television interview programs as the administration's spokesperson this weekend.

White House officials appear to have deliberately chosen Miller, whose portfolio does not include foreign policy, in part to avoid having to give a definitive answer about Flynn.

Flynn's future with the administration is at issue because of indications that he may have misled his colleagues, including Vice President Mike Pence, about his contacts with the Russian ambassador during the weeks before Trump's inauguration. That would normally be a severe problem for someone in Flynn's position, but Trump may not want to appear to be dropping an aide under pressure from the media and Democratic critics.

The FBI has been examining Flynn's contacts with Ambassador Sergey Kislyak, according to multiple news reports. Agents are looking at whether Flynn tried to undermine the Obama administration's move to toughen sanctions against Moscow after concluding that Russia had meddled in the U.S. election.

Flynn had publicly denied discussing sanctions with Kislyak. But on Thursday, a Washington Post account , citing nine current or former U.S. officials, flatly contradicted those denials. The article quoted a representative for Flynn as backing away from his previous statements, saying that though Flynn "had no recollection of discussing sanctions, he couldn't be certain that the topic never came up."

Since the Post published its report, the White House has passed up several opportunities to publicly back up Flynn. Trump, asked about the report on Friday, said he was unaware of it.

Shortly after Miller's appearances on "Meet the Press" and ABC's "This Week," Trump tweeted his approval of Miller's statements, again without mentioning Flynn.

Aides to Pence, who had publicly repeated Flynn's denials in a television interview, have signaled their boss' unhappiness with the national security advisor. After the Post published its account, a White House official pointedly told the paper that Pence had made his statements based on what Flynn had told him.

Flynn's contacts with Kislyak may not have broken any laws; the relevant one, the Logan Act, which bars private citizens from interfering with U.S. diplomacy, is an 18th century statute that is periodically waved around as a threat, but has never been used for a prosecution.

But if Flynn misled Pence and other colleagues about what he did, that could make his continued presence in the national security job untenable.

Several leading Democrats in Congress have said the reports suggest Flynn should be fired .

7:52 a.m.: This post was updated with Trump's tweet.

Trump's National Security Adviser Flynn Trying To Survive Crisis

By Steve Holland

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Turmoil At The National Security Council, From The Top Down

By David E. Sanger, Eric Schmitt And Peter Baker

New York Times, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — These are chaotic and anxious days inside the National Security Council, the traditional center of management for a president's dealings with an uncertain world.

Three weeks into the Trump administration, council staff members get up in the morning, read President Trump's Twitter posts and struggle to make policy to fit them. Most are kept in the dark about what Mr. Trump tells foreign leaders in his phone calls. Some staff members have turned to encrypted communications to talk with their colleagues, after hearing that Mr. Trump's top advisers are considering an "insider threat" program that could result in monitoring cellphones and emails for leaks.

The national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn, has hunkered down since investigators began looking into what, exactly, he told the Russian ambassador to the United States about the lifting of sanctions imposed in the last days of the Obama administration, and whether he misled Vice President Mike Pence about those conversations. His survival in the job may hang in the balance.

Although Mr. Trump suggested to reporters aboard Air Force One on Friday that he was unaware of the latest questions swirling around Mr. Flynn's dealings with Russia, aides said over the weekend in Florida — where Mr. Flynn accompanied the president and Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe — that Mr. Trump was closely monitoring the reaction to Mr. Flynn's conversations. There are transcripts of a conversation in at least one phone call, recorded by American intelligence agencies that wiretap foreign diplomats, which may determine Mr. Flynn's future.

Stephen Miller, the White House senior policy adviser, was circumspect on Sunday about Mr. Flynn's future. Mr. Miller said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that possibly misleading the vice president on communications with Russia was "a sensitive matter." Asked if Mr. Trump still had confidence in Mr. Flynn, Mr. Miller responded, "That's a question for the president."

This account of life inside the council — offices made up of several hundred career civil servants who advise the president on counterterrorism, foreign policy, nuclear deterrence and other issues of war and peace — is based on conversations with more than two dozen current and former council staff members and others throughout the government. All spoke on the condition that they not be quoted by name for fear of reprisals.

"It's so far a very dysfunctional N.S.C.," Representative Adam B. Schiff of California, the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said in a telephone interview.

In a telephone conversation on Sunday afternoon, K. T. McFarland, the deputy national security adviser, said that early meetings of the council were brisker, tighter and more decisive than in the past, but she acknowledged that career officials were on edge. "Not only is this a new administration, but it is a different party, and Donald Trump was elected by people who wanted the status quo thrown out," said Ms. McFarland, a veteran of the Reagan administration who most recently worked for Fox News. "I think it would be a mistake if we didn't have consternation about the changes — most of the cabinet haven't even been in government before."

There is always a shakedown period for any new National Security Council, whose staff is drawn from the State Department, the Pentagon and other agencies and is largely housed opposite the White House in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

President Barack Obama replaced his first national security adviser, Gen. James Jones, a four-star former supreme allied commander in Europe, after concluding that the general was a bad fit for the administration. The first years of President George W. Bush's council were defined by clashes among experienced bureaucratic infighters — Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell among them — and by decisions that often took place outside official channels.

But what is happening under the Trump White House is different, officials say, and not just because of Mr. Trump's Twitter foreign policy. (Two officials said that at one recent meeting, there was talk of feeding suggested Twitter posts to the president so the council's staff would have greater influence.)

A number of staff members who did not want to work for Mr. Trump have returned to their regular agencies, leaving

a larger-than-usual hole in the experienced bureaucracy. Many of those who remain, who see themselves as apolitical civil servants, have been disturbed by displays of overt partisanship. At an all-hands meeting about two weeks into the new administration, Ms. McFarland told the group it needed to "make America great again," numerous staff members who were there said.

New Trump appointees are carrying coffee mugs with that Trump campaign slogan into meetings with foreign counterparts, one staff member said.

Nervous staff members recently met late at night at a bar a few blocks from the White House and talked about purging their social media accounts of any suggestion of anti-Trump sentiments.

Mr. Trump's council staff draws heavily from the military — often people who had ties to Mr. Flynn when he served as a senior military intelligence officer and then as the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency before he was forced out of the job. Many of the first ideas that have been floated have involved military, rather than diplomatic, initiatives.

Last week, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis was exploring whether the Navy could intercept and board an Iranian ship to look for contraband weapons possibly headed to Houthi fighters in Yemen. The potential interdiction seemed in keeping with recent instructions from Mr. Trump, reinforced in meetings with Mr. Mattis and Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, to crack down on Iran's support of terrorism.

But the ship was in international waters in the Arabian Sea, according to two officials. Mr. Mattis ultimately decided to set the operation aside, at least for now. White House officials said that was because news of the impending operation leaked, a threat to security that has helped fuel the move for the insider threat program. But others doubt whether there was enough basis in international law, and wondered what would happen if, in the early days of an administration that has already seen one botched military action in Yemen, American forces were suddenly in a firefight with the Iranian Navy.

Ms. McFarland often draws on her television experience to make clear to officials that they need to make their points in council meetings quickly, and she signals when to wrap up, several participants said.

And while Mr. Obama liked policy option papers that were three to six single-spaced pages, council staff members are now being told to keep papers to a single page, with lots of graphics and maps.

"The president likes maps," one official said.

Paper flow, the lifeblood of the bureaucracy, has been erratic. A senior Pentagon official saw a draft executive order on prisoner treatment only through unofficial rumors and news media leaks. He called the White House to find out if it was real and said he had concerns but was not sure if he was authorized to make suggestions.

Officials said that the absence of an orderly flow of council documents, ultimately the responsibility of Mr. Flynn, explained why Mr. Mattis and Mike Pompeo, the director of the C.I.A., never saw a number of Mr. Trump's executive orders before they were issued. One order had to be amended after it was made public, to reassure Mr. Pompeo that he had a regular seat on the council.

White House officials say that was a blunder, and that the process of reviewing executive orders has been straightened out by Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff.

Still, Mr. Flynn presents additional complications beyond his conversations with the Russian ambassador. His aides say he is insecure about whether his unfettered access to Mr. Trump during the campaign is being scaled back and about a shadow council created by Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump's top strategist, who was made a member of the council two weeks ago. For his part, Mr. Bannon sees the United States as headed toward an inevitable confrontation with two adversaries — China and Iran.

Mr. Flynn finds himself in a continuing conflict with the intelligence agencies, whose work on Russia and other issues he has dismissed as subpar and politically biased. Last week, in an incident first reported by Politico, one of Mr. Flynn's top deputies, Robin Townley, was denied the high-level security clearance he needed before he could take up his job on the council as the senior director for Africa.

It was not clear what in Mr. Townley's past disqualified him, and in every administration some officials are denied clearances. But some saw the intelligence community striking back.

Two people with direct access to the White House leadership said Mr. Flynn was surprised to learn that the State Department and Congress play a pivotal role in foreign arms sales and technology transfers. So it was a rude discovery that Mr. Trump could not simply order the Pentagon to send more weapons to Saudi Arabia — which is clamoring to have an Obama administration ban on the sale of cluster bombs and precision-guided weapons lifted — or to deliver bigger weapons packages to the United Arab Emirates.

Several staff members said that Mr. Flynn, who was a career Army officer, was not familiar with how to call up the National Guard in an emergency — for, say, a natural disaster like Hurricane Katrina or the detonation of a dirty bomb in an American city.

At the all-hands meeting, Mr. Flynn talked about the importance of a balanced work life, taking care of family, and using the time at the council to gain experience that would help staff members in other parts of the government. At one point, the crowd was asked for a show of hands of how many expected to be working at the White House in a year.

FOIA CBP 000880

Mr. Flynn turned to Ms. McFarland and, in what seemed to be a self-deprecating joke, said, "I wonder if we'll be here a year from now?"

Democrat Cummings Says Trump Adviser Must Explain Russia Calls

By Tom Howell Jr.

Washington Times, February 12, 2017

The House's top Democratic investigator on Sunday said National Security Adviser Michael T. Flynn needs to explain whether he discussed sanctions with Russia's ambassador, saying the retired general's shifting explanations are only raising new questions.

Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland also wants to know whether President Trump knew about Mr. Flynn's conversations with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak in December, when President Obama was still in charge of foreign relations.

"Did the president instruct General Flynn to talk to the ambassador?" Mr. Cummings, the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, told ABC's "This Week."

Both parties have been uncomfortable with Mr. Trump's apparent coziness with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Democrats, in particular, have questioned whether the Russians have personal or financial influence over the U.S. president.

Mr. Flynn initially denied discussing Russian sanctions during the December calls. Last week, however, his spokesman said he "couldn't be certain" that the topic never came up.

Vice President Mike Pence had already gone on national television to say Mr. Flynn and Russian ambassador hadn't discussed sanctions.

"He really put the vice president in a very awkward and a very sad position," Mr. Cummings said.

"He is the national security adviser," he added. "He is supposed to be the one to make sure these kind of things don't happen, and here he is embroiled in all of this."

White House policy adviser Stephen Miller on Sunday declined to say whether misleading Mr. Pence would be a fireable offense in the Trump administration.

"It's not for me to answer hypothetical. It wouldn't be responsible. It's a sensitive matter," Mr. Miller told NBC's "Meet the Press." "General Flynn has served his country admirably. He served his country with distinction."

Copyright © 2017 The Washington Times, LLC. Click here for reprint permission.

Trump Friend Says Priebus Is 'In Way Over His Head'

By Philip Rucker

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

One of President Trump's longtime friends made a striking move on Sunday: After talking privately with the president over drinks late Friday, Christopher Ruddy publicly argued that Trump should replace his White House chief of staff.

"A lot of people have been saying, 'Look, Donald has some problems,' and I think he realizes that he's got to make some changes going forward," Ruddy said in an interview with The Washington Post.

Ruddy went on to detail his critique of White House chief of staff Reince Priebus: "It's my view that Reince is the problem. I think on paper Reince looked good as the chief of staff — and Donald trusted him — but it's pretty clear the guy is in way over his head. He's not knowledgeable of how federal agencies work, how the communications operations work. He botched this whole immigration rollout. This should've been a win for Donald, not two or three weeks of negative publicity."

Ruddy insisted that he was speaking only for himself and not the president, and he would not reveal whether Trump had confided in him about Priebus because the conversation was private.

White House spokesmen did not respond to a request for comment on Ruddy's statement.

Ruddy — who is chief executive of Newsmax Media and a member of Trump's Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Fla. — spoke to The Post shortly after appearing on CNN, where he threw Priebus under the proverbial bus.

"I think there's a lot of weakness coming out of the chief of staff," Ruddy told anchor Brian Stelter in a live interview from Miami. "I think Reince Priebus [is a] good guy, well-intentioned, but he clearly doesn't know how the federal agencies work. He doesn't have a really good system. He doesn't know how the communications flow."

Trump, Ruddy continued, is "not getting the backup he needs" from Priebus.

Ruddy said he spent about 30 minutes talking privately with Trump late Friday at Mar-a-Lago after the president's dinner with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, after Abe had retreated to his suite for the night.

"Since the [CNN] show, I've gotten three text messages from sitting Cabinet members praising my appearance," Ruddy said. "They realize this whole government depends on this chief of staff."

He declined to identify the Cabinet secretaries.

Ruddy praised White House press secretary Sean Spicer and other administration officials who have come under public scrutiny. He said blame for missteps at the dawn of Trump's presidency should fall squarely on Priebus.

"What I'm hearing from a lot of people on the inside is that Reince is not giving Donald the pushback that he needs," Ruddy said. "He just doesn't have the gravitas that Donald would respect at the end of the day."

Trump Friend Suggests Reince Priebus Is In Over His Head

By Michael D. Shear

New York Times, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — A longtime friend of President Trump's who met with him this weekend in Florida issued a public rebuke of the president's chief of staff on Sunday, blaming him for the botched rollout of Mr. Trump's targeted travel ban and saying the early chaos in the White House may not ease until he departs.

The friend, Christopher Ruddy, the chief executive of Newsmax Media, said in an interview that Mr. Priebus was well meaning and well liked. But he said Mr. Priebus was in over his head, and he hinted that Mr. Trump may already be growing weary of the man he chose to run the White House.

"He doesn't waste a lot of time," Mr. Ruddy said of the president. "If he thinks somebody is not performing, he moves pretty quickly."

The remarks by Mr. Ruddy, made in one of several interviews he gave to news outlets on Sunday, underscored the tensions inside the West Wing as members of the president's senior staff jockey for power and influence.

Mr. Ruddy said he spent 30 minutes with the president on Friday night after Mr. Trump's dinner with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan at Mar-a-Lago, the Trump resort in Palm Beach, Fla., of which Mr. Ruddy is a member.

"I do think it was botched," Mr. Ruddy said of the executive order on immigration, which caused confusion at airports as officials struggled to interpret it and which has been halted by the courts. He said the fallout had obscured lobbying restrictions imposed by Mr. Trump on executive branch employees after they leave the administration.

"Nobody talks about that," Mr. Ruddy said. "It's a very popular position Trump took. But nobody's talking about that because they got caught in this quagmire."

Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the deputy communications director for the White House, defended the chief of staff, saying: "The president has made unbelievable progress in just his first 21 days, bringing back jobs, saving taxpayers money and securing the nation. Reince has successfully led the team that has implemented President Trump's agenda."

A senior administration official, who was not authorized to respond publicly to Mr. Ruddy and spoke on the condition of anonymity, questioned the relevance of the news executive's opinion about Mr. Priebus. "This sounds like somebody with an ax to grind who has no real access to the president," the official said Sunday evening.

Mr. Ruddy is not one of Mr. Trump's closest friends and is not in the circle of political advisers that the president has installed in the White House. But he has known Mr. Trump for many years and spoke with him often during the transition period.

After an interview on CNN on Sunday morning, Mr. Ruddy said, Mr. Priebus called him and asked that he "keep an open mind" in the days ahead.

"He gave me a briefing on all the things they are doing to improve and streamline communications," Mr. Ruddy said, though he declined to give details. "He asked me if I would keep an open mind as they make progress. I said, 'Absolutely.'"

Mr. Ruddy said that he had told Mr. Priebus that he would not take back his criticism. But he said they had agreed to "meet up and have dinner in the near future."

Despite his prominent role at the White House, Mr. Priebus is not a longtime confidant of the president's. As chairman of the Republican National Committee, he remained neutral through the primary race and became an enthusiastic backer of Mr. Trump in the general election.

During the transition, Mr. Trump named Mr. Priebus chief of staff, but announced the choice in the same news release in which he named Stephen K. Bannon, the former head of Breitbart News, as his chief strategist. Mr. Bannon received top billing in the announcement.

Mr. Priebus provided Mr. Trump with a semblance of order as he entered the White House as a first-time elected official, serving as a bridge to the Republican congressional leadership and hiring veteran officials to help the president. But he has faced nearly constant criticism from some of his colleagues and from people outside the West Wing.

Since Inauguration Day, Mr. Trump has moved quickly to issue a series of executive actions and make good on his campaign promises. But the first three weeks of his term have been marred by controversies over the travel ban, his insults of judges and others on Twitter, ethical charges revolving around Trump businesses, and reports of infighting among White House staff members.

Mr. Ruddy declined to say whether he had discussed Mr. Priebus with Mr. Trump on Friday, or whether he thought the president was inclined to make a change.

"It's really the president's decision, if he were ever to make that," Mr. Ruddy said. "It's his alone. I think you are going to see results in the next 60 days. That's a critical time."

Trump Friend Who Slammed Priebus Now Says His Plans Are 'Impressive'

By Will Sommer

The Hill, February 12, 2017

Christopher Ruddy, a friend and ally of President Trump, has softened his stance on White House chief of staff Reince Priebus just hours after slamming him on national television.

Ruddy, the CEO of the conservative Newsmax Media, criticized Priebus Sunday on CNN's "Reliable Sources," saying that the former chairman of the Republican National

Committee was out of his depth with federal agencies and showing "a lot of weakness." Ruddy's remarks came two days after he had a brief private meeting with Trump.

But in a tweet Sunday evening, Ruddy appeared to praise Priebus, calling his plans for the White House "impressive!"

Reince just briefed me on new WH plans. Impressive! CNN today my personal view. Told him I have 'open mind' based on his results.— Christopher Ruddy (@ChrisRuddyNMX) February 12, 2017

Trump Reviews Top White House Staff After Tumultuous Start

Michael Flynn is under fire, but he's not the only one about whom Trump is voicing his doubts.

By Josh Dawsey And Alex Isenstadt

Politico, February 12, 2017

President Donald Trump, frustrated over his administration's rocky start, is complaining to friends and allies about some of his most senior aides — leading to questions about whether he is mulling an early staff shakeup.

Trump has told several people that he is particularly displeased with national security adviser Michael Flynn over reports that he had top-secret discussions with Russian officials about and lied about it. The president, who spent part of the weekend dealing with the Flynn controversy, has been alarmed by reports from top aides that they don't trust Flynn. "He thinks he's a problem," said one person familiar with the president's thinking. "I would be worried if I was General Flynn."

Yet Trump's concern goes beyond his embattled national security adviser, according to conversations with more than a dozen people who have spoken to Trump or his top aides. He has mused aloud about press secretary Sean Spicer, asking specific questions to confidantes about how they think he's doing behind the podium.

Others who've talked with the president have begun to wonder about the future of Chief of Staff Reince Priebus. Several Trump campaign aides have begun to draft lists of possible Priebus replacements, with senior White House aides Kellyanne Conway and Rick Dearborn and lobbyist David Urban among those mentioned. Gary Cohn, a Trump economic adviser, has also been the subject of chatter.

For now, Priebus remains in control as chief of staff. He was heavily involved in adviser Stephen Miller's preparation for appearances on Sunday morning talk shows, which drew praise from the president.

If there is a single issue where the president feels his aides have let him down, it was the controversial executive order on immigration. The president has complained to at least one person about "how his people didn't give him good advice" on rolling out the travel ban and that he should have waited to sign it instead of "rushing it like they wanted me to." Trump has also wondered why he didn't have a legal team in place to defend it from challenges.

The discussions come at a tense time for the Trump White House, which has endured a tumultuous start. The president, who can be hard on his staff, is known for orchestrating shake-ups when things aren't going right. His campaign had several leadership changes, and such decisions, such as his late-summer elevation of Conway and Stephen Bannon, are often made by gut.

The White House did not respond to requests for comment.

While Trump is unlikely to make any immediate staff moves, senior administration officials say, he has ramped up his contact with people he trusts outside the White House and has expressed concerns about how things are going. The president is turning to longtime New York friends like investor Stephen Schwarzman for advice and is relying more on Cohn, who worked at Goldman Sachs before joining the Trump team.

"He only asks you a lot of questions when he's unhappy," one person who recently talked to Trump and knows him well said. "If he thinks things are going well, he just tells you how well it's going."

"There will definitely be a change by the end of the summer, if not sooner," this person added.

This weekend, Trump had at a 30-minute meeting at his Mar-a-Lago resort with Chris Ruddy, a longtime friend who is chief executive of Newsmax, a conservative website.

Ruddy, who discussed an array of topics with Trump as he sipped whiskey and the president drank Diet Coke, said changes could be afoot. "He's always been successful and had strong people around him, and he's in the process of figuring out who those people are," he said.

After the meeting, Ruddy made an appearance on CNN's "Reliable Sources," where he complained about Priebus and called for his ouster. Ruddy said that his remarks were warmly received by others in the administration, but that he hadn't given the president a heads-up beforehand.

"A number of high-ranking Trump administration officials sent me a text praising my performance," Ruddy said. "If they don't get someone of a different skill set, they're going to continue having problems.

Late Sunday, Ruddy said he had spoken with the chief of staff, who had briefed him on his plans for the White House. Ruddy said he came away from the conversation confident that things would improve.

Adding to the intrigue: Sources say the president is planning to have lunch this week with New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a longtime confidante who is among those mentioned as having a possible future White House role. While Christie, who has a chilly relationship with Trump-son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner, is seen as unlikely

to take a White House job, the lunch has raised eyebrows among some Trump aides. Christie had earlier been offered several roles in the administration but turned them down.

Some Trump friends note that he is adjusting to a new reality — and learning that running a business is a lot different than running the White House. The Washington staff he runs is larger and more complex than the one he oversaw in his business.

"There's a reality check of what's happening, that everything President Trump does, there's going to be a protest and a lawsuit filed," said New York Rep. Chris Collins.

Others point out that, at this early stage, things still need time to settle.

"I think they're getting their sea legs more and more and some of the growing pains will go away in time," said New York Rep. Tom Reed, a top Trump ally. "He's a loyal guy, but he's from the private sector, and he'll want to see results. As long as he sees progress, I think he'll keep his current staff around for the foreseeable future."

White House aides say it can be hard to know what will make Trump happy, or what will anger him. Some aides chafed at Conway's decision to plug Ivanka Trump's merchandise line on television, a move that drew widespread criticism, including from ethics experts who said she was walking a dangerous line. But, far from hurting her internally, Trump liked the appearance, and her standing has increased in his eyes, said several people close to the president.

Yet, as the notoriously image-conscious president endures days of negative headlines, some aides have begun to worry. One person who spoke with the president recently said he seemed to be looking for someone to point his finger at.

"You're not going to see Trump come out and say I was wrong," this person said. "If you're waiting on him to take the blame, you're going to be waiting a long time."

Yet at the same time, Trump has told friends and he wants his Cabinet members to stay the course no matter the accusations lobbed against them, and that shaking up his staff could be seen as an admission of failure.

Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian who recently met with Trump, said the presidency had been "off to the rockiest start that I can remember."

"Everything he rolls out is done so badly," Brinkley said. "It reeks of being short-staffed and not having a true pecking order of production from the White House. They're just releasing comments, tweets and policies willy-nilly. It's been a very convulsive and confusing first few weeks, but nevertheless it's been salad days if you care about Republican policies."

Trump Aide Says Endorsement Of Ivanka's Brand Was 'Light-hearted'

By Julia Harte

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Kellyanne Conway's Dangerous Game

The president's counselor is taking chances now in the hopes of a high-profile payoff down the line.

By Tara Palmeri

Politico, February 12, 2017

Kellyanne Conway once again put herself at the center of controversy this week when she went on national television and declared she was doing a "free commercial" for Ivanka Trump's clothing line, ethics laws be damned. Media snarked, ethics watchdogs barked and even White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Conway had been "counseled" on her behavior.

But according to someone who has worked with Conway and knows her thinking intimately, none of that much matters to Conway. She's taking a long view in her bid to rise in the White House ranks — and she's performing for an audience of one: President Donald Trump.

And so while critics may squawk, what matters most to Conway is that Trump sees her defending him on national television.

For Conway, the prize for loyalty is eventually landing a spot as chief of staff, becoming the first woman ever to hold the role and cementing her spot at the center of Trump's inner circle.

Currently, Conway is seen within the White House as a "Queen without an Army," according to a former campaign official. Conway has a vague title of "counselor," and recently hired a chief of staff and an assistant to support her on her quest to dig into the "next phase of issues," according to Conway. She has taken ownership of opioid-abuse and veterans affairs, a portfolio that Trump cares deeply about. Conway says she plans to turn her office into a war room, and was quick to mention that she has top-security clearance.

She has her eye on leading the White House Council on Women and Girls with former Goldman Sachs executive Dina Powell, senior counselor for economic initiatives, and with Ivanka Trump, should Ivanka decide to take a more active role in the administration.

White House officials say Conway spends her days dipping in and out of meetings to offer big-picture communications advice, while taking on cable news talking heads in the mornings and evenings and steering reporters throughout the day.

Had she wanted it, Conway could have a more defined role already. Trump favored Conway for press secretary over Sean Spicer, the long-time aide to Reince Priebus who currently holds the position. But Conway says she turned

down the job because she wanted a role in setting policy, not just communicating it.

Had Conway wanted more, and as she sees it, she already has it: "All you need to know is that I have the ear and confidence of one person," Conway said.

"I have 'walk-in' privileges," she said, claiming she's among the few who can enter the Oval Office without being summoned.

Conway in January even tweeted a line suggesting that she's filling the shoes of Valerie Jarrett, senior adviser to former President Barack Obama: "Congratulations to @VALERIEJARRETT on post-White House life! I inherited your office & love of the job. All BEST."

Hoping to cement that role, Conway has never wavered in her defense of Trump since becoming his final campaign manager this summer. She took that defense to a new level Wednesday when, with the president under fire for publicly rebuking Nordstrom over dropping Ivanka Trump's clothing line, Conway swept in for a dramatic display of loyalty. In a nationally televised interview, Conway touted the president's right to defend his daughter and then proclaimed she was doing a "commercial" for the first daughter's clothing line — federal rules preventing public officials from using their office to plug private products be damned.

It's what Conway has done for Trump all along, allow him to spit fire for his base and then defend him against everyone else.

That's important to an image-obsessed Trump, who continually assesses what his team is doing to promote him on television.

"She's the one who is more in tuned with what's going on in the world of the media, and what they're thinking which is valuable for Trump, because his entire day fluctuates based on what's in the media," the former campaign official said.

Trump relies on her to create what Conway calls "real people impact."

To Conway, that means communicating in the way that Trump did on the campaign trail, tapping into "the forgotten man and woman." It also means talking about how things will look, like if Trump should sign an executive order in the Oval Office or somewhere in middle America.

"I promised the president I would help oversee communications here," Conway said. "Comms is not press, it's visionary, it's the real people impact."

According to a source close to Trump, the real estate magnate respects the aides that he perceives don't need him, like Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, a multi-millionaire who ran right-wing news outlet Breitbart. And he measures his team as either staff or peers based on their success, which may explain why Conway is quick to explain that Trump knows the sacrifice she has made to work for him.

"He knows I had huge offer to sell my firm. He knows I walked away from millions," Conway said. "I admire the sacrifices he made to be here and he admires the sacrifices I made. Having to sort through the schooling and living situation for my family. It means something to me that he acknowledges it."

But beyond the financials, Conway's dogged loyalty to Trump has come at a personal and professional cost.

Beyond the ethics furor over her using public office to boost Ivanka's private interest, Conway's credibility in under constant attack.

In her attempt to do Trump's bidding, she may have crossed one of the people closer to Trump than herself — Ivanka Trump. A source close to Trump said that his daughter scolded Conway for dragging her brand into an ethics mess and told her not to mention it again on TV. This was a continuation of a conversation that Ivanka Trump had with her father weeks earlier about leaving her business out of the politics, that Conway wasn't aware of.

Trump, for his part, thought that the word "counseled" used by Spicer at the press briefing was "terrible," and said that her statement was just a continuation of his own sentiments, according to someone in the room.

"Why would you use that word? Who's idea was that?" Trump asked Spicer after the press briefing, the source said.

In recent weeks, Conway hit meme-level mockery for thrice referencing the "Bowling Green Massacre" — despite there being no such thing. (Conway says she misspoke in referencing the arrest of bombmakers in Kentucky who were responsible for no domestic terror.)

CNN also openly questioned whether they're willing to have her on air, citing her credibility. Privately, a producer from another network noted that they're reevaluating how valuable a guest such as Conway is, considering it's not clear she's in the room when decisions are being made. "We've been more selective on who we have on from the administration. The decision makers are Reince Priebus, Jared Kushner and Steve Bannon, we should be focusing on those guys," the producer said.

Conway shot back, that "sounds a little sexist."

And not everyone is buying Conway's assertion that she's at Jarrett-level closeness with Trump. Jarrett, a Chicago native, had an almost familial closeness with Obama, and reached that level with his wife Michelle. As assistant to the President for Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs, Jarrett was one of the longest serving senior staffers of the Obama administration with walk-in privileges to the Oval Office.

"I would think that Ivanka or Jared would be the closest to having that sort of relationship," said Ebs Burnough, deputy social secretary in the Obama administration. He said the Obama-Jarrett tie was "a deep tie that can't be replicated overnight."

The two met over lunch in D.C. in early January to talk about the trials and tribulations of the job, where Jarrett warned her about "the incredible volume of requests and offers" and "to be responsive and still focus on why I'm here," according to Conway.

But while Conway does not oversee Spicer and the communications shop, Jarrett had a clearly defined portfolio — including business leaders, state and local leaders and intergovernmental affairs — and three deputy assistants underneath her in the office, and special assistants below them.

Before Jarrett, Karen Hughes oversaw the Bush White House's offices of communications, media affairs and speechwriting, as well as the press secretary.

But the heart of Conway's position remains her connection to Trump.

"I know who I am to this guy and what he relies on me for."

Hadas Gold and Josh Dawsey contributed to the report.

Steven Mnuchin Poised To Secure Confirmation As Treasury Secretary

The former banker would shape a tax-code overhaul and regulation revamp

By Nick Timiraos

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Fashion's Betsy DeVos Connection

By Katherine Rosman

New York Times, February 12, 2017

It was an eventful week for the DeVos family of Grand Rapids, Mich. On Tuesday, Vice President Mike Pence cast the tiebreaking vote, confirming Betsy DeVos as the Trump administration's Secretary of Education.

On Friday, Pamella DeVos staged her New York Fashion Week runway show for the Fall-Winter 2017 collection of her evening-wear line, Pamella Roland. Pamella and Betsy are married to brothers, Dan DeVos and Dick DeVos, who are sons of Richard DeVos, a billionaire founder of Amway.

More than 300 people attended the fashion show, where they ogled aubergine crepe gowns, cashmere coats with fox fur cuffs and numerous sequined numbers, as models strode down the runway to tunes such as Michelle Gurevich's "Russian Romance." The education secretary, however, was not among them. Hours earlier, she was booed and harangued by protesters outside of a school in Washington that she had come to visit.

Despite her sister-in-law's absence, in an interview backstage, Pamella said Betsy had been an ardent supporter of the fashion line since it was introduced in 2002. "She wears it beautifully; she's tall and thin and has been one of my best customers," the designer said.

Of the hoopla surrounding her sister-in-law's nomination and confirmation, Ms. DeVos said, "It's crazy because, I'm telling you, she's very smart and she knows what she was walking into. She can handle it. But no one would do this if she didn't have a love of education of the children."

Ms. DeVos has tried to keep her public and fashion personae apolitical. Though some captions in her Instagram feed link to one of her daughter's accounts where the DeVos family's enjoyment of President Trump's inaugural festivities are on full display, Ms. DeVos avoids connecting her brand to her family, which gave financial support to Mr. Trump's presidential campaign.

As to why, consider the response of some in attendance when they learned of her family connection.

Just before the lights went down, Sarah Gerrish, the fashion market director at Redbook settled in at her assigned seat next to Aja Mangum, a freelancer editor covering the show for Modern Luxury publications. Both said they had second thoughts about being at the show when they learned of Pamella Roland's ties to Mr. Trump.

"I questioned my attendance," Ms. Gerrish said, noting that she was speaking of her personal convictions, not for her employer.

"It gave me pause," Ms. Mangum said, adding, "But we really don't know what Pamella's politics are, just because of the family she's from."

For Ms. DeVos, it is not just her customers response she is worrying about. "You have to think about the people who work for you, too," Ms. DeVos said. "We don't want to bring that kind of craziness in."

Nevertheless, Ms. DeVos will continue to dress her sister-in-law, the education secretary, as well as other visible women in the nation's capital. This is nothing new. "We've always had a presence in Washington," she said.

While models were primping and Ms. DeVos was giving interviews, the designer's husband glad-handed in the front of the house, greeting family friends as they joined fashion buyers and editors in the large space, darkened by the drawn floor-to-ceiling shades.

A small hubbub surrounded the actress Vanessa Williams, dressed in a white Pamella Roland strapless jumpsuit. Ms. Williams likes Ms. DeVos's designs (she wore one to her May 2016 wedding) because Ms. DeVos is "a woman of a certain age and her pieces are mature without being old-ladyish," she said, looking not the slightest bit old-ladyish.

She is not Ms. DeVos's only celebrity fan. Just a few days earlier, the singer and songwriter Rachel Platten appeared at the Red Dress Collection event, held in honor of the American Heart Association, wearing a red Pamella Roland gown. She also wore a Pamella Roland gown to the

American Music Awards last November. Ms. Platten is best known being a writer of "Fight Song," the unofficial anthem for the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign. On Nov. 8, Ms. Platten posted on Instagram a photograph of a campaign button that says, "A Woman's Place is in the White House." She captioned it "#ImWithHer," likely referring to Mrs. Clinton, not either of the Ms. DeVoses.

How Bannon's Navy Service During The Iran Hostage Crisis Shaped His Views

By Michael Kranish And Craig Whitlock

Washington Post, February 10, 2017

It was just after midnight on March 21, 1980, when a Navy destroyer navigated by Stephen K. Bannon, a junior officer, met with the supercarrier USS Nimitz in the Gulf of Oman. The convoy headed near the Iranian coast, where a secret mission would be launched a month later to rescue 52 U.S. Embassy hostages held in Tehran.

Bannon's ship, the USS Paul F. Foster, trailed the Nimitz, which carried helicopters that would try to retrieve the hostages. But before the mission launched, Bannon's ship was ordered to sail to Pearl Harbor, and he learned while at sea the rescue had failed. A U.S. helicopter crashed into another aircraft in the Iranian desert, killing eight servicemen and dooming the plan to liberate the hostages.

"I have the perfect word" for how the crew felt upon learning the mission failed, said Andrew Green, one of Bannon's shipmates. "Defeated. We felt defeated."

As Bannon has told it, the failed hostage rescue is one of the defining moments of his life, providing a searing example of failed military and presidential leadership — one that he carries with him as he serves as President Trump's chief strategist. He has said he wasn't interested in politics until he concluded then-President Jimmy Carter had undercut the Navy and blown the rescue mission.

Bannon, a former Goldman Sachs investment banker best known for founding the conservative website Breitbart, has become one of the most powerful figures in Washington as chief strategist for Trump. Moreover, in an unusual move for a political operative, Bannon secured a permanent seat on the National Security Council, giving him a voice in critical decisions on defense and foreign policy.

Bannon served seven years in the Navy, with two deployments at sea and then three years as an underling in a Pentagon office dealing with budget and planning. White House press secretary Sean Spicer cited Bannon's naval service as justification for giving him a seat on the National Security Council, saying during a Jan. 29 appearance on ABC's "This Week" that such service gave him "a tremendous understanding of the world and the geopolitical landscape that we have now."

A review by The Washington Post of Bannon's naval career, based on interviews with more than 25 shipmates and an examination of deck logs stored at the National Archives, found that his service was steady but unremarkable. Bannon's naval service is the least-known part of his career, and many details have not been previously reported. The records show that his deployments never involved warfare, and the closest he came to conflict may have been his brief experience at the edge of the hostage rescue fiasco.

Still, the experience shaped his thinking. He saw the military buildup under President Ronald Reagan, and the hostage-taking in Tehran continues to inform his view about that region of the world, as well as the role of U.S. military power and its commander in chief.

In recent years, Bannon has spoken in apocalyptic terms about Islam. In 2007, he outlined a movie in which radical Muslims take over the United States and turn it into the "Islamic States of America." In 2014, he delivered a talk in which he said, "We're now, I believe, at the beginning stages of a global war against Islamic fascism."

Bannon declined to be interviewed.

As a White House official, Bannon played a key role in writing the executive order on immigration that targeted seven countries, including Iran. He has urged that the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran be abandoned. Bannon's seat on the National Security Council will continue to give him extraordinary power to influence the administration's policies.

Grueling duty, but no combat

Bannon, who grew up in a Democratic family in Richmond, signed up for the Naval Reserve in 1976, after graduating from Virginia Tech, and then arrived at 24 years old at the Navy's training center in Rhode Island in 1977. The following year, he set sail aboard the Foster, on which he would travel mostly in the Pacific and Indian oceans from 1978 to 1980, stopping at ports in countries such as the Philippines and Singapore. It was an anti-submarine destroyer whose mission was to trail aircraft carriers and keep them safe.

He was an ensign and then a lieutenant junior grade, assigned to a windowless, two-bed stateroom with desks and a wardrobe area, a comfortable accommodation compared with the warren of bunks where most sailors slept.

His first job gave him responsibility for engineering, including air conditioning, hydraulics and electronics. It was "all the inelegant work of the ship," said Edward "Sonny" Masso, a retired rear admiral who served with Bannon. "Not just anybody succeeds in that job."

Bannon later became a navigator, guiding the ship — at times with a sextant when the electronic system lost contact with satellites — and writing reports.

Not once during Bannon's deployments at sea was the ship involved in combat, but it was grueling duty, full of tedium

and drills, according to shipmates and logs. At times, the Foster would play cat-and-mouse games with Soviet vessels, trailing and testing one another, shipmates said.

Scott Brubaker, an enlisted sailor who served with Bannon, said that experience "will change you forever. . . . You pull into Hong Kong and go to Victoria Peak. You go to Singapore. There are the smells, sometimes the stench, sometimes the abject poverty. . . . We learned we had a very big world, and one that certainly had its inherent risks."

Bannon is remembered by many of his shipmates as a quiet, proficient and studious officer.

William Keating, who was Bannon's roommate for two years, called him "a good guy who did his job," and he had no recollection of political discussion. The portrayal of Bannon today as a far-right nationalist "is not the individual that I knew," Keating said.

On one occasion, Keating recalled, Bannon proudly brought his father on board and gave up his bed so his father could sleep in the stateroom. "I remember the two of them together," Keating said. "They had a really good father-son relationship."

Some shipmates had more critical recollections of Bannon.

"He wasn't the best engineer we had, but he wasn't bad. He was basically an above-average officer," said Robin Mickle, a retired Navy captain.

Mickle said he did not get along personally with Bannon and found him "obnoxious" at times.

"His only problem was that he wasn't in it for the long run. He never really wanted to stay. He told us it would look good on his résumé if he went into politics. The politics part didn't impress any of us."

Bannon told Bloomberg Business Week in 2015 that "I wasn't political until I got into the service and saw how badly Jimmy Carter f---ed things up. I became a Reagan admirer."

Greg Garrison, who served as an engineer on the Foster, said: "What I remember was he was kind of uppity; he didn't get along with enlisted men. He just kind of stuck his nose up at us."

Bannon is remembered as much for his skill at sports as for his work on the ship's deck. When the Foster docked at ports in different parts of the world, the ship's basketball team often lined up games against local competition. Bannon's nickname was "Coast," short for coast-to-coast, because on the basketball court he'd never pass the ball, Mickle said. Bannon also excelled at baseball, although shipmates ribbed him for being called out three times in one inning, recalled David Ziemba, who spoke warmly about his former roommate.

Bannon, meanwhile, scoured newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal for what turned out to be a lucrative sideline. He put money into commodities such as gold and silver, advising shipmates, Masso said, and presaging his career as an investment banker.

"He was like our investment sensei," Masso said, referring to a teaching role.

'A little bit of a hell-raiser'

Bannon's patrols became more tense after Iranians in 1979 took control of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and seized hostages, and the streets filled with protesters chanting slogans such as "Death to America." The Cold War still dominated military thinking, but military planners also put more emphasis on anti-terrorism measures.

The presidential campaign in the United States focused much attention on Iran's seizure of U.S. Embassy officials. Carter, a Democrat, was blasted by Republicans for allowing the hostage saga to have taken place. A nightly news program was called "America Held Hostage," and Reagan, a Republican, vowed to strengthen the country's military.

Back on the Foster, crew members said they were aware of the growing tensions, and they were eager to be part of whatever action might come.

In late November 1979, however, the Foster's sonar dome — a crucial piece of equipment used for navigation and detection — was damaged. Bannon, in his role as navigator, wrote in the deck log: "Slow to 5 Kts to reduce damage to Sonar Dome." The logs do not indicate what caused the damage, and no blame was assessed.

Traveling at about one-third of its normal speed amid stormy seas — during which the Foster was hit with 20-foot-high waves — the vessel made a detour to Guam for repairs.

Then, after nearly two months on Guam and weeks more of travel, Bannon's ship linked up on March 21, 1980, with the USS Nimitz. Three hours after the rendezvous, "Bannon assumed the deck" to help navigate, according to the logs of his ship.

The Nimitz, one of the world's largest supercarriers, already was involved in preparation for the hostage rescue mission. Ziemba, the Bannon roommate, noticed helicopters were stored on the Nimitz that he later realized were to be used in the rescue mission.

Bannon's ship operated from an area called GONZO station, according to deck logs that use the Navy's acronym for Gulf of Oman Naval Zone of Operations. Bannon's ship trailed the Nimitz around the Gulf, part of which borders southern Iran. Then the Foster was ordered to set sail to Pearl Harbor.

What happened next is unclear because all of the deck logs for April 1980 are missing from the National Archives. (Officials said that records for that month were not among the documents it originally received.) It was on April 24 that the rescue mission was launched and resulted in the eight deaths in the desert.

Larry Benson, an enlisted sailor who remembered Bannon as "a little bit of a hell-raiser," said he was told later

that the Foster would have played a further role in the rescue mission if it had been completed. "This was classified. A lot of people didn't know we were part of the process," Benson said. But other sailors said they had no knowledge about that.

The deck logs resume on May 1, and they show that Bannon navigated as the Foster sailed from Pearl Harbor to San Diego.

Some of Bannon's shipmates recalled that the crew was given a ribbon for its modest role. But Bannon and many other crew members were livid at Carter for the botched rescue.

"It shattered his confidence in President Carter," Masso said. "It made him all the more in the tank for Reagan."

In October 1980, with the Foster in port at Long Beach, Bannon went to Masso's home to watch a debate between Carter and Reagan. "He watched that debate like a prize fight," Masso said.

Three months later, after Reagan won the election, Bannon was working for the new president, serving as an assistant in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations at the Pentagon. He watched with satisfaction as Reagan increased the military budget and strengthened the Navy, with most of the focus on combating the Soviet Union. He served for three years and simultaneously studied national security and earned a master's degree at Georgetown University.

Peter Harris, who served with Bannon at the Pentagon and also was in the Georgetown program, recalled that Bannon persuaded him to join the Toastmasters program, which teaches public speaking skills. "We did a lot of briefings, and we wanted to polish our public speaking skills," Harris said.

Harris said Bannon was "an excellent officer" and described their Pentagon duties as "being down the food chain quite a bit . . . but [we] were exposed to a lot. We were all very involved in the Navy budget, working with the senior admirals. It was a good time to understand how the Navy formulates its policies and looks at the force structure 20 years out."

Patrick McKim, who also served with Bannon at the Pentagon and has remained a close friend and sometimes writes for Breitbart, said that the period is crucial to understanding Bannon's development. When Bannon arrived at the dawn of the Reagan era, McKim said, the military was still trying to emerge from the post-Vietnam era and the failed hostage rescue mission.

"People made you ashamed to be an officer," McKim said in an interview arranged by a Bannon associate. Reagan's arrival and the military buildup changed that view, and Bannon idolized the new president. Shortly before Bannon left the military in 1983 and headed to Harvard Business School, he told McKim that he had a vision of his future.

"He mentioned that he'd go to Harvard and come back and be secretary of defense," McKim recalled.

Bannon did not get the top job at the Pentagon. But 34 years after revealing that ambition, Bannon's Navy career can be seen in a different light: It launched him on a path to Trump's side, which may prove to be an even more powerful position.

Alice Crites contributed to this report.

Christie: No Plans To Join Trump Administration When Term Is Up

By Tom Howell Jr.

Washington Times, February 12, 2017

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said Sunday he has no plans to join the Trump administration after his second term in Trenton is over.

"I have absolutely no intention, nor any understanding, that I will be asked to be in the administration in the years to come," Mr. Christie told CNN's "State of the Union." "My view is, I have got a job to do as governor, and then my intention is to go off to the private sector and to help support my family."

Mr. Christie notably backed Mr. Trump after his own presidential bid fell short during the GOP primary campaign. Yet he was nudged out of the running for vice president and attorney general, and then relieved of his duties running the transition effort after the election.

News reports said it didn't help that Mr. Christie, as U.S. attorney, once prosecuted real estate developer Charles Kushner — the father of Mr. Trump's son-in-law, Jared, who is now serving as a top White House aide.

He was also hampered by the prosecution of aides who ordered lane closures near the George Washington Bridge in an apparent payback scheme against a Democratic mayor who refused to endorse Mr. Christie's reelection bid.

Mr. Christie said he still considers Mr. Trump a "very good friend," though he refused to say whether they still chat from time to time.

"The conversations between me and the president of the United States, to the extent they occur, will always remain between me and the president of the United States," he said.

Copyright © 2017 The Washington Times, LLC. Click here for reprint permission.

White House Backs Up Trump's Unproven Voter Fraud Allegations

By Marisa Schultz

New York Post, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — White House advisor Stephen Miller doubled down on President Trump's unsubstantiated claims that thousands of voters were bused from Massachusetts to New Hampshire in November to cost him the win.

"I can tell you that this issue of busing voters in to New Hampshire is widely known by anyone who's worked in New Hampshire politics," Miller, senior policy advisor, told ABC's "This Week." "It's very real, it's very serious."

Asked for evidence on the New Hampshire fraud, Miller said: "Everybody's aware of the problem in New Hampshire."

Trump claimed in a private meeting with senators Thursday that he and GOP Sen. Kelly Ayotte lost New Hampshire because "thousands" of Massachusetts were bused into the state and voted"illegally."

A member of the Federal Elections Commission, Ellen Weintraub, said Friday the scheme Trump alleges would constitute "thousands of felony criminal offenses" and called on Trump to "immediately share his evidence."

Asked repeatedly proof, Miller said voter fraud is a serious issue and will be evaluated by Justice Department once it's up and running.

"We can talk about it more in the future and we now have our government beginning to get stood up, but we have a Department of Justice and we have more officials. An issue of voter fraud, someone is going to be looking at very seriously and very hard," Miller said.

An exasperated host George Stephanopoulos responded: "Just for the record, you have provided absolutely no evidence."

Miller didn't provide any details about Trump's serious allegations in New Hampshire but made sweeping statements, much like his boss.

"The White House has provided enormous evidence with respect to voter fraud, with respect to people being registered in more than one state," Miller said. "Dead people voting, non-citizens being registered to vote. George, it is a fact and you will not deny it that are massive numbers of non-citizens in this country who are registered to vote."

It's not uncommon or illegal to be registered in two different states – such as Trump advisor Stephen Bannon voted in New York while still being registered in Florida. What is illegal is voting in two different states.

President Trump was pleased with Miller's Sunday show responses.

"Congratulations Stephen Miller- on representing me this morning on the various Sunday morning shows. Great job!," Trump tweeted.

Secretaries of state throughout the country stood by their elections are free and fair and have repeatedly said there's no evidence of widespread voter fraud that changed the outcome of the presidential election.

Trump said in a Super Bowl interview on Fox News he'd start a commission headed by Vice President Mike Pence to look into voter fraud. The president previously said – without evidence – the only reason he lost the popular vote Hillary Clinton was that millions of undocumented people voted illegally.

Top Trump Aide Again Asserts Widespread Vote Fraud, Cites No Evidence

By Laura King

Los Angeles Times, February 12, 2017

The Trump administration continued Sunday to assert a widely debunked claim that massive vote fraud helped deprive the president of a popular-vote victory in November's election.

President Trump's senior policy advisor Stephen Miller said in an interview aired Sunday on ABC's "This Week" that "the noncitizen voting issue is pervasive and widespread."

Trump has said that he lost the popular vote to Democrat Hillary Clinton only because 3 million to 5 million illegal immigrants had cast votes for her. Clinton's margin of victory in the popular vote was more than 2.8 million, while Trump won the electoral college vote, 304-227.

That claim of massive illegal voting has been denied by Republican officials in key states, such as Ohio, and by independent observers. Administration officials have never offered any evidence for it.

Democrats say the unsubstantiated fraud claim is being used by Trump and his supporters to pave the way for state legislation meant to suppress turnout by groups that tend to vote Democratic, including African Americans and young people.

A week ago, Trump said he planned to have a special commission overseen by Vice President Mike Pence investigate alleged voter fraud.

In an interview on Sunday, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) ridiculed the notion that widespread illegal voting had occurred in the November election.

"When somebody goes before you and the American people, saying '3 to 5 million people voted illegally in the last election,' nobody believes that," said Sanders, who had sought the Democratic presidential nomination. He was interviewed on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"There is not a scintilla of evidence," Sanders said. "What would you call that remark? It's a lie. It's a delusion."

Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.), in a separate interview, said the voter-fraud claim was one of several that had caused him and some other lawmakers to wonder if Trump was "not right mentally."

Speaking on CNN's "State of the Union," Franken said such a statement was "not the norm for a president of the United States, or actually for a human being."

In the ABC interview, interviewer George Stephanopoulos pressed Miller for evidence of massive voter fraud. Miller provided none, but asserted that Americans should be "aghast."

Miller also returned to a theme advanced by Trump in a meeting with lawmakers last week that he lost the New Hampshire vote in the general election because thousands of

illegal ballots were cast by residents of neighboring Massachusetts.

"I can tell you that this issue of busing voters into New Hampshire is widely known by anyone who's worked in New Hampshire politics," Miller said on ABC. "It's very real. It's very serious."

New Hampshire has a law requiring voters to show identification before casting a ballot.

Earlier this week, when Trump first raised the New Hampshire claim, the state's former Republican senator Kelly Ayotte, who lost her reelection bid in November, noted that she could have asked for a recount if she had thought the election was tainted by improper voting. She did not do so.

On Sunday, one of the New Hampshire GOP's most experienced officials, Tom Rath, a former attorney general of the state, also denied Trump's suggestion, sending a tweet in which he called it "baseless" and "shameful."

Trump Adviser Repeats Unsubstantiated Vote Fraud Assertions

Despite broad denials, fraud is 'very real, very serious,' Stephen Miller insists

By Rebecca Ballhaus

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Stephen Miller's Bushels Of Pinocchios For False Voter-fraud Claims

By Glenn Kessler

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

White House senior policy adviser Stephen Miller appeared on ABC's "The Week" on Sunday, spouting a bunch of false talking points on alleged voter fraud. (He also repeated similar claims on other Sunday talk shows.) To his credit, host George Stephanopoulus repeatedly challenged Miller, noting that he had provided no evidence to support his claims. But Miller charged ahead, using the word "fact" three times in a vain effort to bolster his position.

Here's a guide through the back and forth.

STEPHANOPOULOS: Let me move on, though, to the question of voter fraud as well. President Trump again this week suggested in a meeting with senators that thousands of illegal voters were bused from Massachusetts to New Hampshire and that's what caused his defeat in the state of New Hampshire, also the defeat of Senator Kelly Ayotte.

That has provoked a response from a member of the Federal Election Commission, Ellen Weintraub, who says, "I call upon the president to immediately share New Hampshire voter fraud evidence so that his allegations may be investigated promptly."

Do you have that evidence?

Stephanopoulus is referring to a Feb. 10 Politico report of a closed-door meeting Trump held with senators to discuss the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court: "The president claimed that he and Ayotte both would have been victorious in the Granite State if not for the 'thousands' of people who were 'brought in on buses' from neighboring Massachusetts to 'illegally' vote in New Hampshire. According to one participant who described the meeting, 'an uncomfortable silence' momentarily overtook the room."

Ayotte lost her Senate race by 743 votes but did not challenge the results; Hillary Clinton defeated Trump in New Hampshire by nearly 3,000 votes.

MILLER: I have actually, having worked before on a campaign in New Hampshire, I can tell you that this issue of busing voters into New Hampshire is widely known by anyone who's worked in New Hampshire politics. It's very real. It's very serious. This morning, on this show, is not the venue for me to lay out all the evidence.

This is false. PolitiFact New Hampshire in November gave New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu a "Pants on Fire" for claiming voters were bused in — and Sununu quickly retreated from his comment. New Hampshire Secretary of State Bill Gardner said that voter fraud was not widespread problem, largely because the law requires voters to show a valid identification at the polls. If an ID is lacking, the voter's photo is taken, they have to sign an affidavit affirming their identify and then state officials follow up.

Sunni later said he did not mean to imply that "I see buses coming over," saying it was more of a figure of speech. "Sununu said he was referring to an incident over Portsmouth state Sen. Martha Fuller Clark allowing Democratic staffers to live at her house in the 2008 and 2012 elections," PolitiFact reported. "Those staffers voted in New Hampshire elections using Fuller Clark's address, which is not illegal, as they were living in the state at least 3 months before the election, the Attorney General later ruled."

We sent the White House the PolitiFact article and asked the White House for additional evidence. We will update if we receive a response.

MILLER: But I can tell you this, voter fraud is a serious problem in this country. You have millions of people who are registered in two states or who are dead who are registered to vote. And you have 14 percent of non-citizens, according to academic research, at a minimum, are registered to vote, which is an astonishing statistic.

Ugh. Miller has once again resorted to bogus claims that we have repeatedly debunked.

To repeat:

A 2012 Pew Center on the States study found problems with inaccurate voter registrations, people who registered in more than one state (which could happen if the voter moves and registers in the new state without telling the former state) and deceased voters whose information was still on the voter

rolls. But the primary author of the Pew report tweeted in response to Trump's staff's claim that he "can confirm that report made no findings re: voter fraud."

As to the 14 percent figure — stemming from research by Old Dominion University professors, using data from 2008 and 2010 — that has also been misrepresented by Trump and his staff. They have ignored updates and challenges to the research. The researchers have also warned that "it is impossible to tell for certain whether the noncitizens who responded to the survey were representative of the broader population of noncitizens."

One of the researchers, Jesse Richman, wrote about the Trump staff's use of his research. The results "suggest that almost all elections in the US are not determined by noncitizen participation, with occasional and very rare potential exceptions," he said, noting "there has been a tendency to misread our results as proof of massive voter fraud, which we don't think they are."

In other words, the researcher who Miller is citing says his research does not show what Miller claims.

STEPHANOPOULOS: You can't make a — hold on a second. You just claimed again that there was illegal voting in New Hampshire, people bused in from the state of Massachusetts.Do you have any evidence to back that up?

MILLER: I'm saying anybody — George, go to New Hampshire. Talk to anybody who has worked in politics there for a long time. Everybody is aware of the problem in New Hampshire with respect to —

STEPHANOPOULOS: I'm asking you as the White House senior — hold on a second. I'm asking use as the White House senior policy adviser. The president made a statement, saying he was the victim of voter fraud, people are being bused from —

MILLER: And the president — the president — the president was.

STEPHANOPOULOS: Do you have any evidence?

MILLER: If this is an issue that interests you, then we can talk about it more in the future. And we now have our government is beginning to get stood up. But we have a Department of Justice and we have more officials.

An issue of voter fraud is something we're going to be looking at very seriously and very hard.

But the reality is, is that we know for a fact, you have massive numbers of non-citizens registered to vote in this country. Nobody disputes that.

False. As shown above, this is disputed even by the researcher whose work is being cited by Miller: "There has been a tendency to misread our results as proof of massive voter fraud, which we don't think they are."

MILLER: And many, many highly qualified people, like Kris Kobach, the Kansas secretary of state, have looked deeply into this issue and have confirmed it to be true and have put together evidence.

And I suggest you invite Kris Kobach onto your show and he can walk you through some of the evidence of voter fraud in greater detail.

Miller mentioned Kobach, but in Kansas, his efforts at proving voter fraud have been mocked in Kansas.

In a scathing editorial titled "Kris Kobach is a big fraud on Kansas voter fraud," the Kansas City Star accused the "publicity-seeking" Kansas Secretary of State of throwing out "wild claims" and wasting taxpayer funds as part of "loathsome attacks on U.S. immigration policy."

State Rep. John Carmichael, a Democrat, has introduced a bill to strip Kobach of his prosecutorial power because he has "dramatically overstated the frequency of voter fraud during his tenure as Kansas' secretary of state," the Wichita Eagle reported in January. "Carmichael noted that Kobach has not brought a single case against a noncitizen for voting illegally. All of the cases he has brought concern U.S. citizens accused of voting in more than one state."

STEPHANOPOULOS: Just for the record, you have provided absolutely no evidence. The president's made a statement.

MILLER: The White House has provided enormous evidence with respect to voter fraud, with respect to people being registered in more than one state, dead people voting, non-citizens being registered to vote. George, it is a fact and you will not deny it, that there are massive numbers of non-citizens in this country, who are registered to vote. That is a scandal.

As noted, the "enormous evidence" has been repeatedly debunked. Saying it over and over does not make it so.

MILLER: We should stop the presses. And as a country, we should be aghast about the fact that you have people who have no right to vote in this country, registered to vote, canceling out the franchise of lawful citizens of this country.

That's the story we should be talking about. And I'm prepared to go on any show, anywhere, anytime, and repeat it and say the President of the United States is correct 100 percent.

STEPHANOPOULOS: Well, you just repeated, though, you just made those declarations. But, for the record, you have provided zero evidence that the president was the victim of massive voter fraud in New Hampshire. You provided zero evidence that the president's claim that he would have won the general — the popular vote if 3 million to 5 million illegal immigrants hadn't voted, zero evidence for either one of those claims. The Pinocchio Test

Stephanopoulos is right. The White House continues to provide zero evidence to back up its claims of voter fraud. Officials instead retreat to the same bogus talking points that have been repeatedly shown to be false.

It's pretty shameless to cite research in a way that even the researcher says is inappropriate, and yet Miller keeps saying 14 percent of noncitizens are registered to vote. The Republican governor of New Hampshire has admitted he was wrong to say buses of illegal voters voted in the election, and yet Miller shamelessly suggests that is the case. Miller cites a supposed expert on voter fraud, Kris Kobach, who has been mocked for failing to prove his own claims of voter fraud. Miller also repeats a claim about people being registered to vote in two states, even though that is not an example of voter fraud.

Miller earns Four Pinocchios — over and over again. Four Pinocchios

Sen. Al Franken Admits Some Senate Republicans Have Concerns About President Trump's Mental Health

By Adam Edelman, New York Daily News

New York Daily News, February 12, 2017

Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) suggested Sunday that he thought President Trump was suffering from poor mental health and claimed some of his Republican colleagues felt the same way.

When asked by CNN's Jake Tapper if was true that Republican colleagues of his in the Senate had "expressed concerns about President Trump's mental health," Franken confirmed they had.

" A few," Franken said. "It's not the majority of them, it's a few."

"We all have this suspicion that he … that he lies a lot, that he says things that aren't true," Franken, the former Saturday Night Live star-turned politician, said, referring to Trump's debunked voter fraud claims.

"That is not the norm for a President of the United States, or actually for a human being," he said.

While several politicians have questioned Trump's "fitness" for the presidency, no one in the Senate or House has explicitly expressed concerns about his mental health.

Several mental health professionals spoke to The News about the President's over-the-top narcissism and other issues. (ANDREW HARRER / POOL/EPA)

Mental health professionals, on the other hand, have all but confirmed they think Trump is ill.

Several told the Daily News last month that they feared Trump's hubris, narcissism, defensiveness, belief in untrue things, conspiratorial reflexiveness and attacks on opponents, and suggested they could lead to serious consequences for the nation.

A top psychotherapist affiliated with the esteemed Johns Hopkins University Medical School even wrote a report saying Trump "is dangerously mentally ill and temperamentally incapable of being president."

That expert, John D. Gartner, went on to diagnose Trump with "malignant narcissism."

The Latest: Senator Says Trump's Mental Health Is Questioned

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – The Latest on President Donald Trump (all times EST):

3:55 p.m.

A Democratic senator claims that "a few" of his Republican colleagues have expressed concern to him about President Donald Trump's mental health.

Sen. Al Franken of Minnesota says the concern stems from questions about Trump's truthfulness.

Franken tells CNN's "State of the Union" that the concern arises "in the way that we all have this suspicion" that "he lies a lot."

Franken cites Trump's groundless claim that he would have won the popular vote in the presidential race if not for 3 million to 5 million immigrants in the country illegally voting for his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton.

And Trump is said to have told some senators in a private meeting at the White House that he and former Republican Sen. Kelly Ayotte would have won in New Hampshire if not for voters bused in from out of state.

12:15 p.m.

President Donald Trump is hoping to have more members of his Cabinet on board this week – if the Republican-controlled Senate acts as expected.

Senators are to vote Monday evening on banker Steven Mnuchin (mih-NOO'-chin), Trump's pick to lead the Treasury Department, and Obama administrator holdover David Shulkin to be promoted to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Shulkin's path has been fairly smooth so far. But that's not been the case for Mnuchin.

Democrats complain that he failed to protect thousands of homeowners from unnecessary foreclosures when he headed OneWest Bank. Republicans on the Senate Finance Committee unanimously voted in favor of Mnuchin after committee Democrats boycotted the vote.

Trump is scheduled to meet with Mnuchin on Sunday afternoon at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

11:05 a.m.

A top White House aide says it's not up to him to say whether President Donald Trump retains confidence in national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Policy director Stephen Miller says the White House didn't give him anything specific to say about Flynn during Miller's appearances on the Sunday news shows. Miller calls

it "an important matter" and "a sensitive matter" best answered by Trump, Vice President Mike Pence or chief of staff Reince Priebus.

At issue is whether Flynn discussed U.S. sanctions in calls with Russia's ambassador while President Barack Obama was still in office. The conversations may have broken U.S. law aimed at barring private citizens from conducting diplomacy.

A Washington Post report last week contradicted Flynn's previous denials, as well as those made by Vice President Mike Pence in a televised interview.

9:35 a.m.

President Donald Trump is praising the actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers for the recent "enforcement surge" that officials say is targeting immigrants who are in the country illegally and have criminal records.

Trump tweets that "the crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

Advocacy groups contend the government has rounded large numbers of people as part of stepped-up enforcement. The agency calls the effort no different from enforcement actions carried out in the past.

Trump policy adviser Stephen Miller tells NBC's "Meet the Press" that the emphasis is on deporting those he calls "criminal aliens" and who "pose a threat to public safety."

Miller says "we're going to focus on public safety and saving American lives and we will not apologize."

9:20 a.m.

President Donald Trump's chief policy adviser says the White House is exploring "all of our options" after a federal appeals court handed the administration a legal setback on Trump's executive order on immigration.

Stephen Miller tells NBC's "Meet the Press" that the White House could pursue "additional executive actions" – as Trump suggested on Friday – as well as judicial appeals.

Miller says the goal is to pursue "every single possible action to keep our country safe from terrorism."

He's also criticizing judges for taking "power for themselves that belong squarely in the hands" of the president.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Franken: GOP Colleagues Question Trump's Mental Health

By Kyle Balluck

The Hill, February 12, 2017

Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) said early Sunday that Republican colleagues have expressed concern to him about President Trump's mental health.

"A few, yeah," he said on CNN's "State of the Union."

"We all have this suspicion that, you know, he lies a lot. He says things that aren't true. That's the same as lying, I guess," Franken, who's mentioned as a possible 2020 presidential candidate, added.

"You know, 3 [million] to 5 million people voted illegally," Franken said, referencing Trump's unsubstantiated claim that widespread voter fraud cost him the popular vote.

"That is not the norm for a president of the United States or actually for a human being."

Franken Dings Trump Over Warren Insult

By David Cohen

Politico, February 12, 2017

Minnesota Sen. Al Franken on Sunday assailed President Donald Trump over his latest reported insult of Sen. Elizabeth Warren, saying he would have told the president the remark was "racist."

At a White House meeting Thursday with some of Franken's Senate colleagues, Trump was reported to have referred to Warren as "Pocahontas," a moniker he had previously used to ding the Massachusetts Democrat over her past claim to some sort of Native American heritage. Neither Franken nor Warren was at the meeting.

"I would have said something," Franken told Jake Tapper on CNN's "State of the Union."

When asked to elaborate on what he would have said if he had been there, Franken said: "Mr. President, with all due respect, that's racist. Please stop doing that. I am on Indian Affairs. This is completely unacceptable. You really should stop doing this, it doesn't serve anybody."

Trump had dubbed Warren "Pocahontas" on other occasions. Back in June, he tweeted: "Pocahontas is at it again! Goofy Elizabeth Warren, one of the least productive U.S. Senators has a nasty mouth. Hope she is V.P. choice."

On Sunday, the sharp-tongued Franken also zinged the administration on other topics, calling new Education Secretary Betsy DeVos "the least qualified nominee I've ever seen" and saying an "independent investigation" on the Trump administration's connections to Russia is needed. "He has sidled up to Putin in so many ways," Franken said of the president.

On CNN, Franken also doubled down on his comments Friday on HBO's comedic "Real Time With Bill Maher," saying

that at least some of his colleagues are privately worried about the president's mental health.

"A few," the Democratic senator said in answering Tapper's question about whether his GOP colleagues are worried about Trump's state of mind. "Not the majority of them, but a few."

Asked why, Franken said, "He lies a lot, he says things that aren't true," citing Trump's remarks about massive voter fraud in the November election, including his assertion last week about illegal voters being brought from Massachusetts to New Hampshire.

Franken added: "That is not the norm for a president of the United States or actually for a human being."

Bernie Sanders Calls Trump A 'Pathological Liar'; Al Franken Says 'A Few' Republicans Think Trump Is Mentally Ill

By Ed O'Keefe

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) on Sunday called President Trump a "pathological liar," while Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) reiterated that "a few" Republican senators are concerned about the president's mental health.

The strong words from two high-profile senators came as Democrats attacked Trump's travel ban and said that members of his administration should be investigated or have security clearances suspended for recent comments or conversations with Russian officials.

Sanders made the remarkable charge on NBC's "Meet the Press" as he attacked Trump's travel ban — which faces a federal court challenge — and Republican plans to revamp the Affordable Care Act.

"We have a president who is delusional in many respects, a pathological liar," Sanders said.

"Those are strong words," moderator Chuck Todd interjected while asking Sanders whether he can work with a liar.

"It makes life very difficult. It is very harsh, but I think that's the truth," Sanders replied. "When somebody goes before you and says that 3 to 5 million people voted illegally … nobody believes that. There is not a scintilla of evidence to believe that, what would you call that remark? It's a lie. It's a delusion."

Sanders made the comments in response to Todd, who said that some of the senator's former aides are trying to draft him to start a new political party. For now, Sanders said, he remains committed to "working to bring fundamental reform to the Democratic Party, to open the doors of the Democratic Party" to younger, economically distressed voters.

Franken first raised questions about the president's mental health on Friday night on HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher," saying Republican senators privately express "great concern" about Trump's temperament. The senator doubled down Sunday morning, telling CNN's "State of the Union" that "a few" Republican senators feel that way.

"In the way that we all have this suspicion that — you know, that he's not — he lies a lot, he says things that aren't true, that's the same thing as lying, I guess," Franken told moderator Jake Tapper, mentioning the president's comments about illegal voters and allegations that residents of Massachusetts traveled to New Hampshire to cast votes in the November election.

"You know, that is not the norm, uh, for a president of the United States or, actually, for a human being," Franken said.

Franken also blasted Trump's travel ban, saying the president "and his group are trying to make Americans more afraid. I think that's part of how they got elected: Just make us more afraid."

Elsewhere, Democratic lawmakers called for investigations into White House counselor Kellyanne Conway, who last week used a national television interview to encourage viewers to buy items from a clothing line designed by Ivanka Trump. The comments appeared to violate a key ethics rule barring federal employees from using their public office to endorse products.

Hours after Conway's interview, members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee called on the Office of Government Ethics to recommend discipline, given that Trump, who is Conway's "agency head," holds an "inherent conflict of interest" because of the involvement of his daughter's business.

Conway's comments were "a textbook case of a violation of the law," Rep. Elijah Cummings (Md.), the committee's top Democrat, told ABC's "This Week" on Sunday.

"You cannot go out there as an employee of the government and advertise for Ivanka Trump or anyone else, their products. You can't do that. And anybody else would be subject to a minimum, probably, of a reprimand, or they could literally lose their job over this," he said.

Cummings added that Conway's promotional message was "very blatant" and "intentional," and said the Office of Government Ethics should "take a thorough look" at the situation before recommending a potential punishment.

Donald Trump Rages About A Mark Cuban POTUS Run

By Mark Moore And Marisa Schultz

New York Post, February 12, 2017

Donald Trump blasted fellow billionaire Mark Cuban on Sunday by claiming he lacks the smarts to become president after the New York Post published a report that floated the

Dallas Mavericks owner as a White House challenger in 2020.

"I know Mark Cuban well. He backed me big-time but I wasn't interested in taking all of his calls," Trump tweeted early Sunday morning. "He's not smart enough to run for president!"

Cuban, a frequent Trump critic who backed Hillary Clinton for president, initially responded on Twitter with a simple laugh.

"Lol," the billionaire tweeted.

But then Cuban upped his attack, writing "How soon they forget" in a tweet that included comments he made in a May 2016 email criticizing Trump's pursuit of the presidency.

"You have a real chance to win. But to make it work you have to really dig in on the issues," Cuban said, adding "You don't have to bore people with details."

That email included a dare that may yet come true for possible presidential candidate Cuban.

"Everyone else is afraid of you. I like to challenge you," he said. "And like you said, I may go after that job some day and it could be against you. So it helps to get a head."

Then responding to a Tweet about what prompted Trump's sudden Twitter strike, Cuban said: "I don't know. But isn't it better for all of us that he is tweeting rather than trying to govern?"

The Post on Sunday reported that White House chief strategist Steve Bannon has asked for the names of potential Democratic challengers against Trump in 2020.

Cuban made the list along with Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy and Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper.

The report, citing sources, said the White House's "biggest fear" was Cuban because he would appeal to Republicans and independents.

"And Mark is the kind of guy who would drop half a billion dollars of his own money on the race," a source told The Post.

Trump is known to have a fast twitter finger, posting comments about news articles and interviews on cable news shows.

On Friday, Cuban made comments in The Star-Telegram, of Fort Worth, Texas, warning American CEOs to be careful in their dealings with the president.

"Do what you think is right," Cuban said. "Be an American citizen first. In the bigger scheme of things, our country benefits from peaceful activism a lot more than it benefits from one more shoe being sold, or one more basketball ticket being sold, for that matter."

Trump first kicked off his Sunday morning tweetstorm from Florida by defending his immigration policies and bashing a federal "court breakdown."

"The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise," Trump tweeted early morning. "Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!"

This weekend, as Trump worked from his Mar-a-Lago resort, immigrant rights groups protested in Arizona, New York and elsewhere against recent deportations and immigration raids under Trump's crackdown.

Trump has repeatedly questioned the judicial branch after unfavorable rulings on his travel ban, which remains on pause.

The president also continued to push back on an appeals court's ruling to continue halting his travel ban on citizens from seven countries and refugees.

"72% of refugees admitted into U.S. (2/3 -2/11) during COURT BREAKDOWN are from 7 countries: SYRIA, IRAQ, SOMALIA, IRAN, SUDAN, LIBYA & YEMEN."

Trump's tweet lowered the estimate of refugees entering the country after a analysis from the State Department's Refugee Processing Center.

On Saturday, Trump was apparently responding to some news reports that pegged the percentage of refugees coming from the seven banned mainly Muslim countries at 77 percent.

"Our legal system is broken! "77% of refugees allowed into US since travel reprieve hail from seven suspect countries." (WT) SO DANGEROUS!" he said.

He also went after his one of his favorite targets "fake news" and claimed CNN cut off Sen. Bernie Sanders' interview because the Vermont independent called the cable network "fake news." Sanders said he was joking and CNN called Trump's allegations "false."

In busy Twitter morning, Trump also praised his interaction with the Japanese prime minister who had been visiting him at the "winter White House" this weekend.

"After two days of very productive talks, Prime Minister Abe is heading back to Japan," Trump tweeted from his Palm Beach resort.

Trump Tweets That Mark Cuban Is Not Smart Enough To Be President

By Martin Finucane

Boston Globe, February 12, 2017

President Donald J. Trump began tweeting early Sunday on topics ranging from immigration raids to a Bernie Sanders appearance on CNN and the intelligence of billionaire Mark Cuban.

One thing he did not tweet on: a North Korean missile launch that once again raised the specter of that country becoming a nuclear power, though he did retweet on Saturday night a brief news conference he and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held to address the news.

Trump made an apparent reference to a wave of immigration raids conducted Thursday and Friday in his first tweet, which was posted at 6:34 a.m. Sunday:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @ realDonaldTrump

The crackdown on illegal criminals is merely the keeping of my campaign promise. Gang members, drug dealers & others are being removed!

5:34 AM – 12 Feb 2017

24,853 24,853 Retweets 121,358 121,358 likes

He posted another tweet that appeared to cite a statistic on refugees entering the United States that the New York Times has reported is somewhat misleading.

Donald J. Trump ✔ @ realDonaldTrump

72% of refugees admitted into U.S. (2/3 -2/11) during COURT BREAKDOWN are from 7 countries: SYRIA, IRAQ, SOMALIA, IRAN, SUDAN, LIBYA & YEMEN

5:55 AM – 12 Feb 2017

19,231 19,231 Retweets 65,249 65,249 likes

He slammed CNN and suggested that the network cut off Senator Bernie Sanders because he used the term "fake news" to describe the network.

Donald J. Trump ✔ @ realDonaldTrump

While on FAKE NEWS @CNN, Bernie Sanders was cut off for using the term fake news to describe the network. They said technical difficulties!

6:14 AM – 12 Feb 2017

21,628 21,628 Retweets 93,075 93,075 likes

CNN responded that Trump's assertion was false and posted a transcript.

CNN Communications ✔ @ CNNPR

@realDonaldTrump False. Transcript from @ErinBurnett intvu w @SenSanders. He was not cut off. Those are the facts. http://cnn.it/2lCW3kb pic.twitter.com/AOFKLHUlGk

7:35 AM – 12 Feb 2017

3,354 3,354 Retweets 7,067 7,067 likes

Trump and the Japanese prime minister played golf this weekend at Trump's resort, Mar-a-Lago, in Florida, an occasion that must have been marred by the news of the North Korean missile launch. Trump bade Abe a farewell in a tweet.

Donald J. Trump ✔ @ realDonaldTrump

After two days of very productive talks, Prime Minister Abe is heading back to Japan. L

7:04 AM – 12 Feb 2017

10,955 10,955 Retweets 67,011 67,011 likes

Finally, this morning, Trump also lashed out at billionaire Mark Cuban, a Trump critic. Trump said Cuban wasn't smart enough to be president.

Donald J. Trump ✔ @ realDonaldTrump

I know Mark Cuban well. He backed me big-time but I wasn't interested in taking all of his calls.He's not smart enough to run for president!

7:23 AM – 12 Feb 2017

12,819 12,819 Retweets 66,313 66,313 likes

Cuban tweeted a short response later on Sunday morning.

Mark Cuban ✔ @ mcuban

Lol https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/830769247185952772 …

8:12 AM – 12 Feb 2017

47,447 47,447 Retweets 145,513 145,513 likes

Here's the Saturday night retweet of the North Korean news conference video.

Donald J. Trump ✔ @ realDonaldTrump

#ICYMI: Joint Statement with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on North Korea.

11:02 PM – 11 Feb 2017

13,379 13,379 Retweets 53,535 53,535 likes

Earlier this weekend, Trump tweeted about playing golf with Abe and South African golfer Ernie Els and having a great time with Abe and his wife, saying they were a "wonderful couple."

He also tweeted another defense of his daughter Ivanka. Last week, he sparked a controversy by tweeting criticism of the Nordstrom chain for dropping her products. (Adviser Kellyanne Conway went even further, asking people to buy the products in an interview from the White House.) In a tweet Saturday, Trump didn't mention Nordstrom specifically.

Donald J. Trump ✔ @ realDonaldTrump

I am so proud of my daughter Ivanka. To be abused and treated so badly by the media, and to still hold her head so high, is truly wonderful!

5:00 PM – 11 Feb 2017

26,641 26,641 Retweets 190,680 190,680 likes

In The Face Of Weighty Problems, Trump Focuses On Squabbles

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis

New York Times, February 12, 2017

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — The morning after North Korea launched a ballistic missile into the sea, apparently to test President Trump's resolve in his first days in office, the new commander in chief wanted to make one thing very clear to the world: Mark Cuban, the billionaire Dallas Mavericks owner, was not smart enough to have his job.

"I know Mark Cuban well," Mr. Trump said Sunday morning on Twitter, where he has 24.7 million followers and has found an even more prominent megaphone since he became president. "He backed me big-time but I wasn't interested in taking all of his calls. He's not smart enough to run for president!"

It was not clear what provoked the insult, although Mr. Cuban has recently been publicly critical of Mr. Trump. The president might have been reacting to a report on Sunday in The New York Post that White House aides view Mr. Cuban as a potential campaign rival in 2020, or to comments Mr. Cuban made to The Fort Worth Star-Telegram on Friday warning corporate executives to be careful in their dealings with Mr. Trump.

But Mr. Trump's put-down was only one in a long list of squabbles that the president has engaged in over the past week with individuals or groups that have aggrieved him. It offered a reminder three weeks into his tenure that even as he faces weighty problems, he is often preoccupied with the narrowest of gripes.

He swiped at Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, for criticizing the counterterrorism raid in Yemen that resulted in the death of a Navy SEAL. The raid has provoked anger in Yemen, where the government requested a review of the operation.

Mr. Trump said Mr. McCain's critique "only emboldens the enemy," and in a pair of postings on Twitter, he said that the senator, who is the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and was taken prisoner during the Vietnam War, has "been losing for so long he doesn't know how to win anymore."

The same day, the president took on Senator Richard Blumenthal, Democrat of Connecticut, for revealing that Judge Neil M. Gorsuch, Mr. Trump's Supreme Court nominee, had called Mr. Trump's attacks on judges "demoralizing" and "disheartening." The comment was confirmed by aides who are shepherding Judge Gorsuch's nomination, but Mr. Trump quickly branded Mr. Blumenthal a liar.

"Ask Senator Blumenthal about his Vietnam record that didn't exist after years of saying it did," Mr. Trump told reporters at the White House, referring to false statements that Mr. Blumenthal admitted to in 2010, after they were revealed.

Mr. Trump's swing at Mr. Blumenthal was itself a function of yet another feud he has pursued, often in incendiary tones, against the judicial branch as it weighs the legality of his executive order banning travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

It began this month when he called the Seattle judge who had blocked the directive a "so-called judge" who had made a "ridiculous" decision. He ratcheted up the insults during a speech to law enforcement officials from around the country, calling a hearing by a three-judge appeals court panel to review the stay "disgraceful" and comparing the intellect of the judges unfavorably with a poor student in high school.

And the president used Twitter twice last week to defend his daughter Ivanka, first targeting the department store chain Nordstrom — which had stopped carrying the apparel line bearing her name because of poor sales — for treating her "so unfairly." Days later, Mr. Trump blamed journalists in a posting in which he expressed pride in Ms. Trump, whom he said had been "abused and treated so badly by the media."

The White House is unapologetic about Mr. Trump's outspoken style, even when it crosses the traditional lines observed by presidents of both parties, who have tended to avoid individual attacks on sitting senators, judges or individual companies, given the powers of the office. That Mr. Trump is willing, and even eager, to ignore those conventions, his aides say, is one reason his supporters adore him.

"Part of the reason the president got elected is because he speaks his mind," Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary, said last week, questioned about Mr. Trump's harsh words about members of the judicial branch. "He doesn't hold it back, he's authentic and he's not going to sit back, I think, when he feels very passionately about something."

Personal complaints and grievances have always weighed on, and sometimes motivated, American presidents in powerful ways, none more than Richard M. Nixon and Lyndon B. Johnson, said Matthew Dallek, a political historian.

"If you go back and listen to the tapes, they would talk privately with members of Congress or their staffs, and Nixon would say some pretty crazy things — about Jews, about people in the media who were out to get him — some of it was very petty, personal stuff," Mr. Dallek said. "What is unusual is that President Trump is doing this publicly and it's a near-daily occurrence, it's multiple times a week."

His habit of picking public fights is likely to appeal to the roughly 40 percent of voters who support Mr. Trump, but it may repel others whose support he will need to govern effectively and, ultimately, to win re-election.

"It brings respect for the institution of the presidency way down, and it also plays into the narrative of all the millions of Americans who don't see him as legitimate, because he's using the power of the office now to attack individual citizens," Mr. Dallek said.

In a post on Twitter responding to Mr. Trump's insult on Sunday, Mr. Cuban shared a letter he had written to the president during his campaign last year, in which he advised Mr. Trump to drill down on policy specifics instead of improvising.

"I get that a big part of your base doesn't care about issue details," Mr. Cuban wrote to Mr. Trump, "but to be president, to be this close, you have to dig in and know your" facts.

Mr. Cuban's initial response to the president's sudden broadside was more concise: "Lol."

FOIA CBP 000898

Attorney General Signals Pullback From Obama Initiative On Transgender Bathrooms

Justice Department's court filling withdraws request made by previous administration

By Sara Randazzo

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Without Fanfare, Trump Reverses Obama Order On Justice Department Succession

By Gregory Korte

USA Today, February 10, 2017

WASHINGTON — President Trump has quietly signed an executive order changing the order of succession in the Department of Justice, reversing an executive order by President Obama signed just last month.

The order appears to be the first that Trump has not signed in a public ceremony. It's dated Thursday — the same day Attorney General Jeff Sessions was sworn in — but was not posted to the White House website until Friday morning. The White House did not explain the discrepancy.

The executive order spells out who will act as the nation's highest law enforcement officer if the attorney general dies, resigns or becomes incapacitated. Such orders have been routine since the 2001 terrorist attacks, but Trump's is notable becomes it comes two weeks after he fired acting Attorney General Sally Yates for refusing to defend his executive order banning travelers from seven predominately Muslim countries.

That time, Trump went outside the official order of succession — as he has the right to do — to elevate Dana Boente, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, to acting attorney general.

Because the Senate has not confirmed any other top Justice Department officials, Boente will continue to be second in the line of succession under Trump's order, followed by Zachary Fardon, the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Tammy Dickinson, the U.S. attorney for the Western District of Missouri.

Seven days before he left office, President Obama changed the order of succession without explanation to remove Boente from the list. Obama's order had listed U.S. attorneys in the District of Columbia, the Northern District of Illinois and the Central District of California.

The top positions remain unchanged: the deputy attorney general, the associate attorney general and — at the discretion of the attorney general — the solicitor general and other assistants. But because those positions are now officially vacant, the order currently skips to the Senate-confirmed U.S. attorneys.

Trump Undertakes Most Ambitious Regulatory Rollback Since Reagan

By Juliet Eilperin

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

President Trump has embarked on the most aggressive campaign against government regulation in a generation, joining with Republican lawmakers to roll back rules already on the books and limit the ability of federal regulators to impose new ones.

After just a few weeks in office, the new administration is targeting dozens of Obama-era policies, using both legislative and executive tactics. The fallout is already rippling across the federal -bureaucracy and throughout the U.S. economy, affecting how dentists dispose of mercury fillings, how schools meet the needs of poor and disabled students, and whether companies reject mineral purchases that fuel one of the world's bloodiest conflicts.

The campaign has alarmed -labor unions, public safety advocates and environmental activists, who fear losing regulations that have been in place for years, along with relatively new federal mandates. Business groups, however, are thrilled, saying Trump is- responding to long-standing complaints that a profusion of federal regulations unnecessarily increases costs and hampers their ability to create jobs.

Under Trump, "there's great optimism that all of them will be addressed," said Rosario Pal-mieri, vice president for labor, legal and regulatory policy at the National Association of Manufacturers.

Trump and congressional Republicans are working to strip rules away at an unprecedented rate. One of the most powerful levers is the Congressional Review Act, a 1996 law that gives lawmakers the power to nullify any regulation within 60 days of enactment.

Before Trump took office, the Congressional Review Act had been successfully used only once, to overturn a Clinton administration ergonomics rule in 2001. So far this year, the House has moved to nullify eight new rules and is considering dozens more. Two of those measures — which would loosen environmental restrictions on waste-mining companies and financial disclosure requirements on oil and gas firms — have cleared the Senate and are on their way to the White House for the president's signature.

A more extensive assault on government regulation is likely to come. On Jan. 30, Trump signed an executive order that requires agencies to offset the cost of every significant new regulation by eliminating existing regulations or making them less onerous. The order declares that "the total incremental cost of all new regulations" issued this year "shall be no more than zero."

That sets a far more stringent standard than recent Republican administrations have attempted, experts on regulation said, leaving a slew of Obama-era rules in limbo.

"It's clear as can be that they intend to reduce the level of regulation," said James Gattuso, a senior fellow in regulatory policy at the conservative Heritage Foundation, who said the directive marks the first explicit attempt to contain the costs of federal mandates.

"If successful," Gattuso said, "it would be the first time in a generation," since Ronald Reagan was in the White House.

According to the White House Office of Management and Budget, the cost of federal regulations has grown every year since 1982. Republicans of all stripes have long railed against what they say are crippling economic effects.

"Overregulation has stemmed economic growth and job creation," White House press secretary Sean Spicer recently told reporters. Making sure government rules "are meeting their intent and not stifling job creation at the expense of whatever they were intended to do is something that should be smart and welcome by everybody."

The administration's anti-regulatory push goes well beyond a technical review, how-ever.

"It's a much more aggressive rollback attempt than we've seen in recent years," said Tevi Troy, who served George W. Bush as a senior White House official and in two Cabinet-level agencies. He noted that many conservatives have long been disappointed that the Bush administration did not do more to "clear out some of the regulatory underbrush."

Votes under the Congressional Review Act have come at such a rapid clip that liberal interest groups feel pummeled. After the House voted last week to overturn a planning rule issued by the Bureau of Land Management, Defenders of Wildlife spokeswoman Haley McKey issued a statement headlined: "The Congressional Review Act Claims Latest Victim."

Meanwhile, the Trump White House is employing an executive tactic that dates to the Reagan administration: issuing a 60-day freeze on new regulations.

The tactic is a mainstay of new administrations. George W. Bush initially delayed 90 Clinton-era rules, and Barack Obama delayed, altered or rescinded more than two dozen of Bush's actions.

Within a week of Trump's inauguration, the new administration withdrew 24 significant rules that were about to be sent to the Federal Register for publication, regulatory analyst Curtis Copeland said. The new administration also delayed the effective dates of roughly 250 others, including 30 Environmental Protection Agency rules that were frozen in a single day, with no opportunity for public comment.

As a result, groups that had finally settled long-fought battles are feuding once again. Take the issue of the rusty patched bumble bee, whose population has shrunk 87 percent since the mid-90s. On Jan. 11, the Obama administration declared it would be added to the endangered species list. Last Thursday — a day before those protections were set to take effect — the Trump administration said it would postpone the listing until at least March 21.

Ryan Yates, director of congressional relations for the American Farm Bureau, said the group is "pleased that the administration is taking a second look." If the bee is declared endangered, he said, farmers in parts of Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota would be subject to severe penalties for killing or harming the insects through "normal farming operations" such as plowing and pesticide use. As an alternative, Yates said, the Farm Bureau is open to discussing a strategy for voluntary conservation.

But voluntary plans are inadequate, said Rebecca Riley, a senior attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council. Riley said the group is weighing whether to challenge the delay, which was issued without the normal 30-day period for public comment.

"We don't want to reach a point of no return for the rusty patched bumblebee," Riley said in an email, "but further delay could dash our last, best chance to keep this bee around."

Incoming agency officials are also signaling significant shifts in the way some industries are regulated. In November, the EPA sent out a lengthy request to nearly 20,000 oil and gas companies, asking them to gauge their emissions of methane within 60 or 180 days, depending on their facilities. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas linked to climate change

Matthew Hite, who represents gas processors as vice president for government affairs at the GPA Midstream Association, called the request "unnecessary and duplicative" and estimated that complying would cost each processor nearly $3 million.

Since Trump took office, EPA officials have been granting companies that ask for it a 90-day extension. Several oil and gas officials said they expect the methane survey to be scaled back significantly or abandoned altogether.

Meanwhile, Michael S. Piwo-war, the acting chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, said he has instructed staff to determine whether it is "still appropriate" to require manufacturers to certify that they do not use minerals from conflict-ridden areas such as Congo, where armed groups accused of massive human rights violations profit from their trade.

Some major U.S. firms, including Intel and Tiffany & Co., have embraced the policy, but others have said complying with the disclosure rule is costly and complicated. Lawrence Heim, managing director at Elm Sustainability, an auditing firm that consults on conflict minerals, said he has seen "a notable slowdown" in the demand for doing "due diligence" on the origin of minerals, as manufacturers apparently place bets that the rule will soon disappear.

FOIA CBP 000900

Implementation of Trump's Jan. 30 executive order will be left in large part to the White House budget director. Nominee Mick Mulvaney, a Republican congressman from South Carolina, could be confirmed as soon as this week.

A coalition of liberal groups that include Public Citizen, NRDC and the Communications Workers of America has challenged the order in court, calling it "arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, and not in accordance with the law." They predicted the order would force the government to eliminate critical public protections.

Spicer called those claims "wildly inaccurate," saying they make "a ton of assumptions . . . on what may or may not happen in the future."

Whatever happens in court, Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.) predicts Trump's executive order will cause "complete chaos." Huffman noted that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration briefly declined to issue critical regulations for the opening of fishing seasons off both coasts, unnerving commercial fishermen who rely on the government to set the annual guidelines.

"Apparently members of the new administration don't understand some regulations are critically important for the economic sector, and businesses depend on them," Huffman said.

Some industries are openly worried about what the directive will mean for them. Commercial drone manufacturers, for example, waited four years for the Federal Aviation Administration to issue its first rule integrating drones into public airspace. The FAA has been planning to tackle bigger questions, such as whether drones may fly over people's heads or travel long distances.

Brian Wynne, president of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, said he fears that the answers to those questions will be delayed. The "current inaction," he said in a statement, could prevent drone "operations, such as news reporting, disaster relief and public safety, from becoming a reality."

Many companies, however, foresee huge benefits from the regulatory rollback.

Eric Myers, chief executive at Oil City Iron Works in Oil City, Tex., said he's seen a flood of new orders since Trump took office. The company makes metal castings for equipment used in energy, mining, farming and transportation — industries expected to benefit from Trump administration actions.

"It's not happening in a tidal wave," Myers said in an interview, "but it is coming."

Supreme Court Nominee Has Defended Free Speech, Religion

By Jeff Donn And Geoff Mulvihill

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch has been a defender of free speech and a skeptic of libel claims, an Associated Press review of his rulings shows. His record puts him at odds with President Donald Trump's disdain for journalists and tendency to lash out at critics.

On other First Amendment cases involving freedom of religion, however, Gorsuch's rulings in his decade on the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver reflect views more in line with the president and conservatives. Gorsuch repeatedly has sided with religious groups when they butt up against the secular state.

In a 2007 opinion involving free speech, Gorsuch ruled for a Kansas citizen who said he was bullied by Douglas County officials into dropping his tax complaints. "When public officials feel free to wield the powers of their office as weapons against those who question their decisions, they do damage not merely to the citizen in their sights but also to the First Amendment liberties," Gorsuch wrote.

Trump, who announced Gorsuch as his pick on Jan. 31, has said he is waging a "running war" against the news media and wants to make it easier to sue for libel. The president, who nominated Gorsuch for the high court, has used his political stature to fire off harsh attacks on relatively powerless critics such as the father of a dead soldier or a beauty pageant winner.

Gorsuch has sided with those lower on the power scale. In cases in 2007 and 2016, Gorsuch agreed with the court majority in upholding public employees' claims of retaliation for exercising their constitutional rights of free speech and association.

He repeatedly has interpreted libel law in light of the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech, rejecting claims based on small mistakes in the offending material. He sided with a broadcaster who may have overstated a prisoner's gang ties and a University of Northern Colorado student who mocked a professor in an online parody that showed him in a Hitler-style mustache.

In a 2011 opinion backing A&E Television Networks, Gorsuch said the law protects not just perfectly true statements against libel claims, but also those that are substantially correct. With characteristic flair, Gorsuch wrote: "Can you win damages in a defamation suit for being called a member of the Aryan Brotherhood prison gang on cable television when, as it happens, you have merely conspired with the Brotherhood in a criminal enterprise? The answer is no. While the statement may cause you a world of trouble, while it may not be precisely true, it is substantially true."

Gregg Leslie, legal defense director at the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, said Gorsuch did not break new legal ground on libel or privacy law. But, Leslie said, the judge had upheld existing news media protections "without any hesitation."

In a 2007 privacy case, Gorsuch joined an opinion rejecting the appeal of undercover police officers in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who said their privacy was violated by a TV news broadcast that exposed their names and identities. The court said the broadcast reported on a matter of legitimate public concern because the officers had been implicated in an alleged incident of sexual assault – even though they were eventually exonerated.

In 2014, Gorsuch wrote a concurring court opinion that emphasized First Amendment rights in a campaign finance dispute that also hinged on the constitutional guarantee of equal treatment under the law. Gorsuch agreed with the court majority that Colorado's campaign finance law treated write-in candidates unfairly because it set lower contribution limits for them. He said there's a free-speech guarantee in picking a preferred candidate, and that the Colorado law sprang from "a bald desire to help major party candidates at the expense of minor party candidates."

Outside the courtroom, Gorsuch has a long history of arguing for free speech, sometimes in defense of causes popular with conservatives. As an undergraduate at Columbia University in New York, he said free speech should apply to military recruiters on campus. Despite that, he challenged speech that offended him at the time, threatening to sue over a poster he claimed misstated the financing of a newspaper he helped found.

His respect for free speech notwithstanding, Gorsuch has ruled against false advertising when he believed it contained significant lies. "Most everyone expects a little audacity – maybe even a little mendacity – in their advertising," Gorsuch wrote in 2015 to uphold a claim by General Steel Corp. against a competitor. "But sometimes advertising crosses the line from harmless hyperbole into underhanded deception with material commercial consequences."

In cases involving religion, Gorsuch has leaned toward allowing its free practice but also joined some rulings that might be viewed as actively favoring faith groups. Such cases often split judges because the Constitution bars government both from interfering with religious groups and from actively backing them.

In two of the highest-profile religious freedom cases before his court, Gorsuch joined opinions that sided with Hobby Lobby and Little Sisters of the Poor. They argued that it would violate their religious rights if they were forced to provide employees with coverage for contraceptives as required by President Obama's health care law. The federal government now pays to insure workers for that coverage when employers object to doing so on religious grounds.

In two opinions dealing with three communities, Gorsuch called for hearing further appeals of circuit court action that restricted displays of the Ten Commandments on public property. He took a similar stand on crosses placed along highways to memorialize Utah state troopers.

In 2009, Gorsuch wrote a dissent saying the court should hear arguments for allowing display of the Ten Commandments at the Haskell County Courthouse in Stigler, Oklahoma. He criticized his fellow judges, saying a reasonable observer would not understand the display as the government's endorsement of a religion.

In a case from Pleasant Grove, Utah, the Supreme Court eventually decided to allow a commandments display without requiring local officials to also accept a monument from followers of a little-known religion, echoing Gorsuch's reasoning.

In cases involving religion and inmates, Gorsuch said it was wrong for a Wyoming prison to deny use of an existing prison sweat lodge to a murder convict who wanted to worship there. But the judge agreed with a court majority that an Oklahoma jail did not have to provide halal meals prepared under Muslim law to an inmate of that faith, so long as it provided vegetarian and pork-free options.

And in an opinion in a 2010 case from New Mexico, Gorsuch challenged the sincerity of a couple accused of marijuana trafficking. They claimed the drug was part of their religion as members of their self-styled Church of Cognizance. Gorsuch stated unequivocally that the couple was "running a commercial marijuana business with a religious front."

The drug charge was upheld.

The AP National Investigative Team can be reached at investigate@ap.org

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Supreme Court Nominee Neil Gorsuch Scales Back Description Of Pro Bono Work At Harvard

President Donald Trump had highlighted that work when he introduced his nominee

By Beth Reinhard

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Education Dept. Torched For Misspelling W.E.B. Du Bois In Tweet

By Deirdre Shesgreen

USA Today, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — Well, this isn't going to help Betsy DeVos, Trump's controversial new Education secretary, win any new fans.

The Department of Education on Sunday tweeted a quote about the importance of education from the late W.E.B. Du Bois, the revered historian and civil rights activist who helped found the NAACP.

But the effort to highlight Du Bois' famous words backfired—because whoever sent the Tweet misspelled Du Bois' name, as "DeBois."

The response was ruthless, with Twitter followers of the agency lampooning the misspelling.

The Senate narrowly confirmed DeVos last week despite a firestorm of complaints about her nomination. The billionaire philanthropist is best known as a vocal advocate for charter schools and vouchers, which critics see as a way to undermine public education.

She had a rocky confirmation hearing, during which she seemed to not be familiar with critical education issues, such as the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act.

Several hours after the first Tweet was posted, the Education Department re-posted the message with the correct spelling and apologized for the mistake. But the apology included another mistake, this time a grammatical error.

"Our deepest apologizes for the earlier typo," the department tweeted.

Social Media Mocks Education Dept For Misspelled Tweets

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON (AP) – The Education Department is getting social media criticism after misspelling the name of a prominent African-American sociologist – and then mistyping again when apologizing for the error.

In a tweet Sunday morning from its official account, the department attributed a quotation to W.E.B. DeBois (doo-BOYZ'), incorrectly spelling the last name with an "E."

It immediately drew hundreds of responses mocking the department's misspelling of the sociologist's last name, which is correctly spelled D-U B-O-I-S.

By midday, the department had posted a new tweet with the correct spelling and an apology. "Post updated – our deepest apologizes for the earlier typo," it tweeted, drawing a wave of fresh responses noting a second typo. Soon after, the department corrected the word to "apologies."

One commenter tweeted: "I love that your initial apology for a typo included a typo. We don't need any further proof that DeVos runs this account," referring to billionaire GOP donor Betsy DeVos, who was narrowly confirmed as education secretary last week with a tie-breaker vote by Vice President Mike Pence.

Others posted quizzical looks from African-American students.

Another tweeted: "Smooth move during #BlackHistoryMonth."

A spokesperson for the Education Department said Sunday the misspellings had been made by a long-time department employee. He said a new review process was being put in place with additional staff to prevent future tweet errors.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

DeVos's Education Department Misspells Name Of NAACP Co-founder In Tweet — And The Apology Had A Mistake

By Valerie Strauss

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

(Update: tweets corrected)

Education must not simply teach work – it must teach life. – W.E.B. DeBois pic.twitter.com/Re4cWkPSFA

— US Dept of Education (@usedgov) February 12, 2017

It's not just the White House that seems to have a problem with spelling. Someone at the U.S. Education Department, now led by Secretary Betsy DeVos, does, too.

At 8:45 on Sunday morning, the department's official Twitter account misspelled the name of W.E.B. Du Bois, a black sociologist, historian, civil rights activist and co-founder of the NAACP, the oldest civil rights organization in the United States. DuBois was misspelled as DeBois — an error that might be understandable from a young student, but the U.S. Education Department?

Hours after the tweet was posted — and after the error was lampooned by a number of people on Twitter, it was corrected, with an apology:

Post updated – our deepest apologizes for the earlier typo. — US Dept of Education (@usedgov) February 12, 2017

The department fixed that tweet quickly, changing "apologizes" for "apologies."

It wasn't the first embarrassing spelling error of the young Trump administration. A recent White House list of 78 terrorist attacks that it said the media had deliberately "underreported" was riddled with errors, explained by Washington Post columnist Dana Milbank like this:

The list didn't expose anything new about terrorist attacks, but it did reveal a previously underreported assault by the Trump administration on the conventions of written English.

Here are some of the Twitter reactions:

.@usedgov *W.E.B. Du Bois All good. Not like this is the official Twitter for the US Department of Education. ?— Ryan Wyatt (@Fwiz) February 12, 2017

.@usedgov pic.twitter.com/5ZfvGibEx4 — TyreeBP (@TyreeBP) February 12, 2017

@usedgov OMG, it's DuBois. Who is in charge over there? … oh, wait, I get it. — Jennifer Morgan (@ProfJLMorgan) February 12, 2017

Earlier this month, Trump talked about black abolitionist Frederick Douglass as if he were still alive — at least if Trump's tenses were to be taken literally:

"Frederick Douglass is an example of somebody who's done an amazing job and is getting recognized more and more, I notice."

Douglass, an African American social reformer and statesman, died Feb. 20, 1895.

(Correcting time of tweet)

Education Department Misspells Name Of Civil Rights Icon

By David K. Li

New York Post, February 12, 2017

Betsy DeVos, meet W.E.B. Du Bois.

The US Department of Education, helmed by its new secretary, DeVos, on Sunday misspelled the name of African American historian and civil-rights pioneer W.E.B. Du Bois in a tweet.

The Education Department tweeted at 8:45 a.m, " `Education must not simply teach work – it must teach life.' – W.E.B. DeBois."

The misspelling wasn't corrected until 12:15 p.m.

"Post updated – our deepest apologizes for the earlier typo," the department said.

Critics of DeVos and the Trump Administration had a field day with the flub.

"You should also teach spelling and Black history," tweeted Texas Christian University political-science professor Emily Farris. "Shameful."

Others were amazed it took so long to correct.

Addisu Demissie, a former campaign manager for US Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), tweeted, "sweet baby Jesus delete this … no seriously, I know it's Sunday but can someone get to an internet and handle this."

Even former first kid Chelsea Clinton got in on the act, mocking the education department.

"Is it funny or sad funny that our Dept. of Education misspelled the name of the great W.E.B. Du Bois?" tweeted Clinton, daughter of 2016 popular vote winner Hillary Clinton.

How Both Democrats And Republicans Blindsided Our Best Low-income Students

By Jay Mathews

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

Now that the intense media coverage of new U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos is over, could we please turn our attention to a little-noticed threat to our most effective high school classes?

Congress congratulated itself last year when it passed the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). But its Republican and Democratic sponsors failed to say they were blindsiding teachers and students responsible for a remarkable surge of academic depth in high schools.

The most challenging courses in American public education have been expanding rapidly since the federal government in 1998 began subsidizing disadvantaged students' exam fees in college-level courses, particularly the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. In 2016, 941,557 AP exams were taken by students from low-income families.

At that moment of startling success, the congressional sponsors of ESSA killed the program. Nobody knows yet what will happen as the students scramble to find money for those tough exams in May.

Many people know how prized AP and IB courses are in suburban schools. Students who want to attend selective colleges essentially have to take them. Most of their parents and schools can afford the fees, $93 for the three-hour AP exams and about $116 for what are often five-hour IB exams.

But few people have witnessed the transformation that comes from bringing AP and IB into disadvantaged schools. Go into high schools like Wakefield in Arlington County, Columbia Heights in the District, Mount Vernon in Fairfax County, Foshay in south-central Los Angeles or Young Women's Prep in Miami and you see kids on fire — asking questions, arguing historical points and polishing their writing.

IDEA Public Schools, a charter network in Texas that enrolls mostly low-income students, has AP test participation rates at some campuses twice as high as affluent public schools such as McLean or private institutions such as National Cathedral School. How will their students handle fees far above the $5 to $15 per test they have paid in the past? "If we take away the reimbursement for the AP test, we take away a powerful incentive that moved more kids to test," said Tom Torkelson, chief executive of IDEA Public Schools.

"Our experience tells us that there will be many students who will not register for exams if support for test fees is not available," said Colleen Duffy, a spokeswoman for IB.

The College Board has been encouraging low-income student participation in AP for more than 30 years, beginning with its embrace of East Los Angeles mathematics teacher Jaime Escalante. Escalante and a teacher he trained produced 26 percent of all Mexican American students in the country in 1987 who passed an AP calculus exam. Escalante showed that such results were possible if teachers gave more students more encouragement and time to learn.

Trevor Packer, the College Board vice president who oversees AP, said there are "more than 500,000 low-income students sitting in AP classes now who are affected by the funding changes." The College Board has increased its low-income subsidy from $22 to $31 per exam, which totals more than the former federal subsidy. But it still has to pay for expert human graders who are much more expensive than the machines that score multiple-choice state tests, or the SAT and ACT.

Some Washington-area districts, including Prince George's County and Charles County, say they will protect disadvantaged students from increased fees this year. Nineteen states are using their funds as a stopgap this year while seeing how much money will be available from underfunded federal block grants which AP and IB have to share with dozens of other programs, but most states haven't done much.

Escalante's students held carwashes to pay for tests. Such old-fashioned funding may be necessary. Rich folks like Secretary DeVos could put their money where it would do immediate good if they asked local public schools how to support teenagers who need to more money for those big tests.

Army To Spend $300 Million On Bonuses And Ads To Get 6,000 More Recruits

By Tom Vanden Brook

USA Today, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — The Army plans to spend $300 million in a blitz of bonuses and advertising over the next eight months to recruit 6,000 additional soldiers it needs to fill out its ranks.

Legislation approved by Congress and signed late last year by former president Barack Obama halted a years-long drawdown of U.S. troops. Rising threats around the world have spurred the increase. The Army's new goal for the remaining eight months of the fiscal year is 68,500, up from 62,500 recruits. The addition of 6,000 recruits to the goal makes it the largest in-year increase in the history of the all-volunteer force that dates to 1973.

Rapidly growing the Army also has come at a different type of cost in the past: lower standards for recruits produced sub-par soldiers. Many had to be culled after training. That won't happen this time, said Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Snow, who leads Army Recruiting Command.

"There is very clear guidance from the leadership in our conversations that there is no desire to lower standards," Snow said.

Read more:

By Oct. 1, the Army must hit its target of 476,000 active duty soldiers, up from the previous goal of 460,000. Increased recruiting along with retention of more soldiers will make up the gap. President Trump has said he wants an even larger force — as many as 60,000 more soldiers.

The Air Force and Navy also are boosting their ranks. The Air Force plans to recruit and retain more airmen to meet its goal of 321,000 service members by Oct. 1, up 4,000 from its current total of 317,000, said Ann Stefanek, an Air Force spokeswoman. The Navy plans to add 2,200 recruits this fiscal year, according to Lt. Cdr. Nate Christensen, a spokesman. The Navy has a target of 323,900 sailors for this year. The Marine Corps will add nearly 800 additional Marines this year to hit its target of 185,000, said Yvonne Carlock, a Marine spokeswoman.

Adding just 6,000 soldiers by October will cost the Army $200 million for bonuses to new recruits, $100 million in advertising and at least $10 million more to bolster the corps of recruiters and for processing recruits, Snow said. Hefty price tags will accompany future efforts to expand the Army, he said.

"In order to do this, it's going to require an awful lot of funding," Snow said.

Department of Defense Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Snow during a news conference at the Pentagon in December 2014. (Photo: Chip Somodevilla, Getty Images)

A military budget analyst questioned if the Army was acting too hastily to increase spending this year without congressional approval, and whether it had properly calibrated its proposed bonus payments.

"The Army may be getting a little ahead of itself here," said Todd Harrison, director of defense budget analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a non-partisan think tank. "The money has not been appropriated."

Congress has not yet approved money to fund the troop requirement, and doesn't appear to be in a rush to do so before late April when the temporary legislation funding the federal government expires, Harrison said. The Army's interest in preparing for the changes is understandable since it will need to act quickly when the funding becomes available.

Snow outlined his strategy for the first batch of new soldiers in an interview with USA TODAY. It will require beefier bonuses, more advertising and shorter enlistment periods for some.

Bonuses: The Army will double bonuses, offering as much as $40,000 to new recruits in hard-to-fill military

specialties, Snow said. That compares with bonuses currently of as much as $20,000, he said.

The Army will need to tailor bonuses to get the most bang for its buck, Harrison said. One-size-fit-all bonuses could waste money.

"Some people would have joined anyway" whether eligible for a bonus or not, he said.

Additionally, as many as 600 recruiters will be eligible for bonuses of $500 per month to stay on the job another 12 months. Recruiters must be screened extensively because they occupy what the Army calls a "position of trust," putting them in regular contact with young, potentially vulnerable men and women. The process means that it's difficult to screen and train additional recruiters fast enough to meet demand, Snow said.

The $200 million in bonuses between now and Oct. 1 compares with $284 million handed out in all of 2016. In 2008, when the surge of troops to Iraq was near its height, the Army issued nearly $1 billion in bonuses to recruits.

Advertising: The Army plans to spend $100 million on marketing efforts to reach new recruits. About 75% will be national ads, and 25% in local markets, Snow said. The ads will make reference to the $40,000 bonuses.

Shorter enlistments: The Army will offer a two-year enlistment, down from the usual requirement of three, four or more years. A two-year hitch is expected to appeal to high school seniors who want a short break before college, Snow said. The hope is that many short-termers will stay after being exposed to Army life.

Some of the jobs open to shorter enlistments will likely be those that do not require specialized training like language or computer skills. Infantry, armor and field artillery are some of the jobs open to two-year terms.

The Army has offered two-year enlistments in the past for a limited number of military occupations. The new two-year hitches will be offered more broadly, and will allow soldiers to earn money for college under the GI Bill.

"It allows us really to demonstrate to them in a short period of time that listen, the Army's a lot more than a job," Snow said. "It's a job and an education."

The quality of recruits is measured by high school graduation, performance on military aptitude tests and limiting the number of those who score poorly on those exams. In 2005, due to difficulties in recruiting, the Army lowered the standards for soldiers it would accept.

The price was too high, Snow said.

"There are standards for a reason," Snow said. "When you lower them, you have second- and third-order effects. What we've found by lowering them we were essentially separating soldiers at an increased rate – those that we had lowered the standards for. Right now, the guidance is very clear, and I actually think it is the right guidance, that is we are not going to lower our standards."

Snow and one of his top aides, Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Stoneburg, expressed confidence that the Army would hit its target by Oct. 1 with qualified recruits.

"I feel confident that those here understand the importance of the mission and are committed to the mission," Stoneburg said.

'Significant Uncertainty' About Fiscal Policy Under Trump: Fed's Fischer

By Helen Reid And Abhinav Ramnarayan

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Investors Have Second Thoughts About Trump Trade

Inflation expectations have stalled heading into a slew of data and Janet Yellen's semiannual testimony before lawmakers

By Steven Russolillo

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

'Are We Safe Yet?' The Answer's Not So Simple.

By Robert J. Samuelson

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

Comes now Timothy Geithner, treasury secretary from 2009 to 2013, to tell you that much of what you "know" about Dodd-Frank — Congress's response to the 2008-2009 financial crisis — is wrong. It's a timely review because the Trump administration is promising to overhaul the law. The title of Geithner's essay, carried in the current issue of Foreign Affairs, is simple: "Are We Safe Yet?" The answer is not so simple.

Start with good news. Like many others, Geithner — a critical player in containing the breakdown — doubts the United States faces "a major [financial] crisis anytime soon." To justify this, he offers both statistics and common sense.

Since 2008, U.S. banks have raised roughly $500 billion in new shareholder capital, bringing the total to $1.7 trillion. The added capital provides a larger cushion against losses (and, of course, the new shareholders enjoy any profits). This bolsters confidence that the system can survive unexpected setbacks.

In addition to more capital, banks also have a more stable base of funds used for lending. According to Geithner, deposits now represent 86 percent of U.S. banks' liabilities, up from 72 percent in 2008. Deposits tend to be stable, because most are insured by the government (up to

$250,000 by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.) During the crisis, the flight of uninsured short-term funds (so-called repurchase agreements and commercial paper) threatened the entire financial system. Now this danger is reduced.

The result is a strengthened banking system. "Today, the major U.S. banks could probably sustain losses greater than those experienced in the Great Depression and still have enough capital to operate," Geithner writes.

Psychology reinforces these changes. It has shifted toward caution. "The memory of the global financial crisis still looms large," Geithner observes. "In a way, this should be reassuring. A world worried about the approaching abyss is safer than a more sanguine one, such as in 2006." Loans may be harder to get; but they're also more likely to be repaid.

Still, Geithner serves up much bad news. His essay is organized around four unhappy propositions.

Proposition No. 1: A financial crisis "is certain at some point" — we just don't know when and how bad. Conditions change. Memories fade. Government regulators aren't superhuman. They can't "protect against every conceivable bad event." They also face a dilemma: If regulations are too tough, they will cause "some financial transactions to shift away from banks and toward less regulated institutions."

Proposition No. 2: A true crisis is "not self-correcting." Most declines in markets (for stocks, bonds, loans) are self-limiting. Prices drop to levels that buyers think are a bargain. Not so with a panic. Selling pressures reflect fears that tomorrow's prices will be lower than today's. The resulting "fire-sale prices . . . make large parts of the financial system appear to be insolvent." Someone or something must intervene to stop the spiral.

Proposition No. 3: In a panic, only the federal government can mobilize the needed financial resources "to preserve the functioning of the credit system necessary for economic recovery." In the 2008-2009 crisis, the government provided trillions of dollars of aid through money creation by the Federal Reserve and by Treasury borrowing. Absent this torrent of emergency credit, it's not clear what would have happened.

Proposition No. 4: Despite this, Dodd-Frank has crippled government's ability to defuse future financial crises. It has restricted government's "ability to act as a lender of last resort." The Fed's power to lend to individual institutions is curtailed, making it harder to nip future crises in the bud. The Fed can't act until many institutions are in trouble. Consequently, we are "even less prepared to deal with a crisis" than in 2007.

This, of course, is madness. But it is madness with a political logic. The lesson that much of the public took from the financial crisis is that banks, and Wall Street in general, were "bailed out" and that this rescue was a bad thing. So Dodd-Frank became a vehicle for making sure this never happened again by weakening the Fed and other arms of government to deal with financial crises.

The real Dodd-Frank scandal is that this misinterpretation of events, widely embraced by both parties, has been allowed to stand. In many bailouts, banks' shareholders suffered huge losses or were wiped out; similarly, top managers lost their jobs. The point was not to protect them but to prevent a collapse of the financial system.

If the Trump administration doesn't repudiate the conventional wisdom and change the law accordingly, it risks creating a future, self-inflicted wound. Suppose it is 2028, and the Fed is coping poorly with a huge financial crisis. Someone asks, "What were our leaders thinking when they revoked so many of its powers?" And the answer will be: They weren't.

Are We Safe Yet? | Foreign Affairs

Foreign Affairs, December 12, 2016

The 2008 financial crisis was the most damaging economic event since the Great Depression, for both the United States and much of the global economy. Although the U.S. economy emerged from it more quickly and in better shape than many other economies did, the crisis imposed tragically high costs and left deep economic and political scars. To help prevent another crisis, Congress passed the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act in 2010. These and other reforms have added a considerable margin of safety to the U.S. financial system.

But how safe is that system today? The answer is important, because although the United States may not face a major crisis anytime soon, it is certain to at some point. The choices policymakers make in advance of that event and in the moment will have a major impact in determining the magnitude of the economic damage. Indeed, the U.S. financial system's vulnerability to a crisis depends not only on the strength of the regulation designed to prevent one but also on how much freedom policymakers have to respond when prevention fails. It's just as in medicine, where the public's health depends not just on immunizations, nutrition, and checkups but also on hospitals, surgery, and emergency care.

Determining whether the system is now safer requires looking at three different dimensions of the question. The first involves trying to assess the underlying fragility of the system today. How much dry tinder, so to speak, is there in terms of short-term liabilities, and how much privately owned capital is available to absorb losses in an economic downturn? The second involves the ability to limit the intensity of a crisis. How much fiscal capacity does the government have to cushion a fall in private demand, and how much monetary scope does the Federal Reserve have to lower interest rates? The third dimension has to do with the other powers necessary to prevent a financial crisis from spiraling out of control.

D.C. Region Braces For Shock From Trump Effect On Spending, Federal Workforce

By Robert McCartney

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

The Washington region's prospects aren't all bad under the Trump administration. A top local economist joked at a recent business conference that demonstrators flocking to rallies in the District will drop bundles of cash, spurring growth from "protest tourism."

But the area is bracing for shock at the hands of a reinvent-the-rules president who routinely insults the city and a Republican-led Congress that for years has sought to shrink the federal government that is the area's principal employer.

Officials and analysts expect sharp cuts in federal nondefense spending, which would strain local budgets nationwide and pose a particular threat to economic growth here. In addition, proposed tax changes risk stalling the Washington area's high-priority efforts to provide more affordable housing. And business leaders say President Trump's demonization of the capital, highlighted by his calls to "drain the swamp," has hurt the region's reputation as a good place to work.

There is a potential bright side: Cuts in federal programs could be partly offset by increased spending on the military and infrastructure such as roads and bridges. Some Republicans predict that the District and its suburbs will benefit, along with the rest of the country, as Trump's policies strengthen the economy.

No one knows what the full impact will be, because the administration and congressional leaders have sent mixed signals about their intentions. And since the White House does not release details of its budget proposal for several weeks, local jurisdictions are making plans for next year with no specific information on how much federal support they're going to lose.

But the region is widely expected to fare worse than most because of steps to restrict the size and cost of the federal workforce — an effort already begun with the president's early freeze on federal hiring.

"We will bear undue burden," Alexandria Vice Mayor Justin Wilson (D) said. The relevant question is, he said, "Is it really, really bad, or cataclysmic?"

'A bit of a blindfold'

Although many of the administration's plans remain murky, there is a broad expectation that they will include substantial cuts over time in nonmilitary spending.

Such reductions would be necessary to help pay for Trump's promises to lower taxes and raise defense spending, without cutting entitlements such as Social Security and Medicare.

Trump's pick for national budget director, Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-S.C.), is an outspoken advocate for slashing federal budgets. Republicans in Congress and conservative groups advising the White House want to shrink programs including Medicaid, food stamps, housing assistance and Head Start.

"As a whole, we're spending too much," said Rachel Greszler, senior policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation, which has supplied advisers to Trump's team. "They're trying to take a comprehensive look at government and evaluate it from a business perspective."

In many cases, the GOP and its allies propose repackaging current domestic spending programs as block grants to states and localities — a change that critics decry as a way to mask cuts.

The net effect would be to shift costs and responsibilities to state and local governments. That's the scenario that is worrying local officials, who don't know how much the burden will be.

"We're sort of adopting a budget this year with a bit of a blindfold on," said Sharon Bulova (D), chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The county, she said, doesn't know "what's going to happen to some sizable sources of funding that come from the federal government, and what will we need to try to pick up ourselves."

D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) said the "biggest hit" to her budget would occur if President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act is repealed without replacement. The District's auditor has estimated that it would cost $563 million in the first year to preserve insurance for all who have it now.

"Either we would raise revenue or we would have to not do something else," Bowser said.

Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker III (D) said an ACA repeal could mean that a long-planned regional hospital would not be financially viable, because so many recently insured poor patients would again need uncompensated care.

"It just means that local leaders are on their own to finance a lot of domestic, social and economic priorities," said Amy Liu, vice president and director of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution. "There's an alarm bell going off across the country, mostly because of uncertainty."

Housing at risk

The threat to affordable housing programs in the increasingly expensive Washington region has received far less attention, but is a prime concern for Bowser and other officials.

The risk is an unintended side effect of a planned slashing of the corporate tax rate, strongly favored by Trump and Congress. Such a tax cut would reduce companies' incentive to invest in affordable housing projects by purchasing the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit,

FOIA CBP 000908

which provides financing that has been vital for building low-cost rental housing nationwide.

Bowser, who has made affordable housing one of her signature issues, said the city would have to find "more local dollars . . . to fill the gaps." But it is not clear how the city could do so.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) said cuts in federal investments in health research would hurt the country and his state, which is home to the headquarters of the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration.

However, increased spending on defense and cybersecurity would be a boon for the region, given the large numbers of military personnel and private contractors working for the Pentagon and National Security Agency.

"That's one area that will be very positive," said Rep. Barbara Comstock (Va.), the only Republican in the local congressional delegation.

Although Comstock criticized Trump's federal hiring freeze for not being "strategic," she predicted that his plans to lower taxes and reduce regulations would create jobs throughout the nation, including in the Washington region.

"Getting the economy going again is going to be the single most important thing," she said.

Infrastructure uncertainty

Trump's much-publicized proposal to raise $1 trillion for infrastructure over 10 years is fueling a contradictory mix of hope and skepticism.

It would be a big plus for the region if the administration and Congress agreed to sharply boost federal funding for transportation, water projects and other investments. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments says the region needs to find an extra $58 billion for such projects over the next 15 years.

Trump's pick for Interior secretary, Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.), said at his confirmation hearing that he wanted to spend $150 million to repair the Memorial Bridge and fix nonworking fountains in the District's parks.

But the most detailed infrastructure plan to emerge from the Trump campaign did not call for fresh government spending. Instead, it proposed tax credits to encourage private investment. And at a recent congressional hearing, none of the corporate chief executives who testified said they thought sufficient private money would surface to meet the public's infrastructure needs.

"This issue is front and center," said Chuck Bean, executive director of the Council of Governments. "Will there be federal funding or will this be a financing mechanism?"

Because most House Republicans and conservative advisers in the White House generally favor reducing spending on Metro and other forms of mass transit, local officials are acutely worried about federal funding for Washington's long-troubled subway.

Comstock said she will fight to protect the unique, $150 million a year subsidy that Congress gives Metro for safety improvements and other capital needs.

The federal workforce and official Washington in general found itself under attack for much of the 2016 presidential campaign. That hostility has not waned since the inauguration and what seems to be a new era of anti-Trump protests in the capital.

For a city that found itself booming and growing more trendy in the years following the 2008 recession, the anti-Washington rhetoric is a bitter, and potentially costly pill to swallow.

"Greater Washington has become the enemy, has become the swamp," James Dinegar, president of the Greater Washington Board of Trade, told NewsChannel 8. He said Trump "is doing a lot of damage to the reputation of this region, and it will make it difficult to recruit and retain people."

Although the region is gradually becoming less dependent on federal spending, the federal government is still its largest employer by far.

Beyond barbs and insults, any restraints on federal hiring or pay have an enormous impact here.

Terry Clower, director of George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis, said in an interview that a federal pay freeze, as proposed by some Republicans, would deprive the regional economy of more than $900 million a year in cost-of-living increases alone.

But at a conference in Falls Church on Feb. 1, Clower also noted, with a smile, that the new administration was having at least some positive impact.

Spending by anti-Trump demonstrators visiting from the suburbs or out of town, he quipped, could become "the biggest growth sector in our economy."

Patricia Sullivan contributed to this report.

Trump Takes On Tech Industry In Early Policy Moves

Silicon Valley executives worry President Donald Trump will scale back or undo net neutrality and other Obama-era victories for internet companies

By John D. McKinnon

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Speed Limits On Trump's Infrastructure Drive: Federal Laws, Rare Species And Nimbys

Environmental regulations and neighborhood opposition routinely bog down projects and will likely constrain the administration's plan to spend $1 trillion on 'highways, bridges, tunnels, airports'

By David Harrison

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

The Grammys Red Carpet Gets Political With 'Make America Great Again' Dress

By Erin Jensen

USA Today, February 12, 2017

It didn't take long for Sunday's Grammy Awards to get political. Before the show even started, artist Joy Villa arrived on the red carpet in a form-fitting dress that made Kellyanne Conway's Inauguration Day outfit look subtle.

The blue gown, with an open back, had President Trump's campaign slogan and stars on the front of the gown.

On the back, in large, block lettering, the dress spelled out POTUS' last name.

Twitter was not feeling the look.

Highly Suspect used fashion to make an anti-Trump statement. A member of the band's jacket read "Impeach."

Trump-inspired fashion also came down the runway at Public School's fashion show Sunday, though it was more protest than sign of support. Models donned merchandise that read "Make America New York" while walking to Woody Guthrie's This Land Is Your Land.

ScHoolboy Q also made a fashion statement with his Grammys' attire. The artist wore a pink sweatshirt that read "GIRL POWER," while his daughter wore a bubble-gum Gucci suit.

Singer Wears Trump-inspired Dress To Grammys

By Christine Burroni

Page Six, February 12, 2017

Singer Joy Villa made her arrival at Sunday's Grammy Awards political by turning President Trump's campaign slogan into a glitzy gown.

The 25-year-old, who is not nominated, originally appeared in a flowing, conservative white dress and then unveiled her statement-making dress underneath.

The navy-blue dress — with details of red, silver and white — reads "Make America Great Again" along the front, while its train reads "TRUMP" in big, blinged-out letters.

Villa, who describes herself as a "vegan" and a "feminist" in her Twitter bio, immediately sparked a social media storm.

"@Joy_Villa imagine choosing to end your career before anyone even knew who you were," tweeted one user.

Another simply wondered if Trump himself was in on the look.

"How much did he pay you," asked another Twitter user.

A request for comment was not immediately returned.

Katy Perry Shows Solidarity With Elizabeth Warren In Grammys Performance

By Isaac Feldberg

Boston Globe, February 13, 2017

Katy Perry showed some subtle support for Senator Elizabeth Warren during a Grammys performance of her new single "Chained to the Rhythm," proudly displaying a "Persist" armband atop her black-and-white pantsuit.

The accessory, of course, is a reference to the liberal battle cry "Nevertheless, she persisted," popularized in the wake of Warren being barred from reading a 1986 letter by Coretta Scott King about Jeff Sessions during last week's debate over his nomination for attorney general.

Advertisement

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell inadvertently originated the phrase. "Senator Warren was giving a lengthy speech," he said, in silencing her. "She had appeared to violate the rule. She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted."

Perry, who repeatedly stumped for Hillary Clinton and performed at fund-raisers to support her campaign throughout 2016, hasn't been shy about expressing political opinions at public events — and she delivered during her Grammys turn. As the song wound down, Perry was backlit by a projection of the US Constitution.

Skip Marley, who raps one verse on "Chained to the Rhythm," joined Perry for the performance. "We gonna call this era Purposeful Pop," Perry tweeted about the song on Friday.

Trump Criticized Obama For Golfing. Now He Spends Weekends On The Links.

By Erin McCann

New York Times, February 12, 2017

As a private citizen, Donald J. Trump was repeatedly critical of President Obama's fondness for relaxing with a round of golf.

"Can you believe that, with all of the problems and difficulties facing the U.S., President Obama spent the day playing golf." Mr. Trump tweeted on Oct. 13, 2014. "Worse than Carter."

"We pay for Obama's travel so he can fundraise millions so Democrats can run on lies," he said a day later. "Then we pay for his golf."

Then for a third time that month, Mr. Trump tweeted about Mr. Obama's golf habit on Oct. 23, 2014.

"President Obama has a major meeting on the N.Y.C. Ebola outbreak, with people flying in from all over the country, but decided to play golf!"

As a president, though, Mr. Trump seems to have had a change of heart about the appropriateness of a president hitting the links.

On Saturday, Mr. Trump played golf with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan at two of his courses in South Florida: 18 holes at the Trump National Golf Club in Jupiter, and nine more at the Trump International Golf Club in nearby West Palm Beach. On Sunday, he returned, without Mr. Abe, to the club in West Palm Beach for five hours.

It was the president's second visit this month to South Florida, where he owns the Mar-a-Lago resort in West Palm Beach along with the golf courses.

Last weekend, he spent four and a half hours at one of his golf clubs, a day before hosting a Super Bowl Party at Mar-a-Lago, which its original owner, the heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post, named the "winter White House."

Little was known about Mr. Trump's time at either golf club this month — the White House last week declined to confirm whether he even played, or who accompanied him. On Saturday, Mr. Trump and his aides covered doors and windows at the Trump National Golf Club in Jupiter to keep the journalists inside from snapping photos of the president and Mr. Abe on the course.

But an administration-approved photo appeared on Mr. Trump's social media pages that showed the two leaders high-fiving under a blue sky dotted with fluffy white clouds, a gigantic American flag waving in the background.

It was a change for a man who over the past five years had repeatedly criticized the sitting president for golfing, on the grounds that the trips were costly to taxpayers and came at the expense of time that he thought Mr. Obama should have spent on government duties.

Since Mr. Trump became president, his resort, Mar-a-Lago, has doubled its initiation fee to $200,000, drawing a rebuke from critics who say he is profiting off the presidency. But Mr. Trump and his aides say that using an informal setting outside Washington to entertain foreign leaders — as other presidents have done — will put those dignitaries at ease.

On Saturday, Mr. Trump told reporters that he and Mr. Abe "got to know each other very, very well" while golfing.

Mr. Trump was not always so critical of Mr. Obama's golf habit. In June 2012, he tweeted that he would someday like to play a round of golf with the president.

And that same year, he suggested that Mr. Obama should have expanded his circle of golfing buddies to include more Republicans: "That way maybe the terrible gridlock would end."

But soon Mr. Trump had soured on Mr. Obama's time on the greens, often tweeting his own critiques and retweeting those of his followers:

Mr. Trump is, by at least one account, a fine golfing companion. In December, he hit the greens with Tiger Woods, who had also played with former Presidents Bill Clinton, Barack Obama and George H. W. Bush.

Mr. Woods's game with Mr. Obama, in 2013, became the subject of conservative anger when The Washington Times reported last year that the game had cost taxpayers nearly $4 million. The fact-checking website Snopes found that claim to be mostly false, and noted that the figure was "based on an accounting formula that is often highly misleading about the true costs involved."

As for his own round with Mr. Woods, Mr. Trump, in an Instagram post on Dec. 24, said he had had a "great" time, and that they were joined by Mr. Trump's son Donald Trump Jr. and granddaughter Kai.

Mr. Woods, in a blog post, said he and Mr. Trump had played for fun while Mr. Woods tested new drivers.

"What most impressed me was how far he hits the ball at 70 years old," Mr. Woods wrote. "He takes a pretty good lash," he said, adding, "Our discussion topics were wide-ranging; it was fun."

Sanders: Protests On Left Aren't Like The Tea Party

By Daniel Strauss

Politico, February 12, 2017

Sen. Bernie Sanders bristled at the idea that liberal protests against Donald Trump all over the country are analogous to the protests and demonstrations that marked the beginning of the tea party movement.

"It's not a tea party because the tea party was essentially funded by the billionaire Koch Brothers family," Sanders said during an interview with NBC News's Chuck Todd on Sunday on "Meet The Press." "This is a spontaneous and grassroots uprising of the American people."

Sanders went on to say that there would be protests all over the country meant to pressure Republicans to answer questions on repealing and replacing Obamacare.

"On February 25th, two weeks from yesterday, there is in fact going to be rallies all over this country and I think you're going to see people in conservative areas, in progressive areas, asking the Republicans: 'What are you going to do when you throw 23 million people off of health insurance?'" Sanders said, adding: "'How many of them are going to die? what's your plan when you raise prescription drug costs on average $2,000 for senior citizens? Are you really going to really repeal the protection against preexisting conditions so that people who have cancer or heart disease will no longer be able to have heart insurance? You going to throw kids off of their parents' health insurance programs?'

The tea party movement began in 2009 in opposition to some of the policies of President Barack Obama, including the Affordable Care Act. The recent protests in favor of the ACA have flipped the script somewhat.

"Republicans are going to have to start answer those questions and the American people are pretty clear, overwhelmingly they want to improve the Affordable Care Act, they do not want to simply repeal it," Sanders said.

'We're Not An Authoritarian Country,' Patrick Kennedy Says About Trump

By Michelle R. Smith

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Former U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy says he thinks what President Donald Trump has done so far in office will ''hopefully spark a reexamination of who we are as a people.''

The member of one of the nation's most famous Democratic families told The Associated Press in an interview he sees threats to the constitutional form of government, and said his father, the late U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy, of Massachusetts, believed that Americans should never take democracy for granted.

Advertisement

''He lost his brothers serving this country, whether in World War II or in elective office, and just knew that this country needed to be the beacon that everyone looked at it around the world,'' Kennedy told the AP. ''He'd be so distressed right now to see people cynically tear apart what so many people have laid down their lives to build.''

The former eight-term congressman from Rhode Island left office in 2011 and has stayed in the public sphere as an activist for better care for mental health and addiction, with endeavors such as The Kennedy Forum. He now lives in New Jersey with his wife and children. Kennedy's cousin, Chris Kennedy, son of the late U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy, announced last week he is running for governor of Illinois as a Democrat.

Get Political Happy Hour in your inbox:

Your afternoon shot of politics, sent straight from the desk of Joshua Miller.

Sign Up

Thank you for signing up! Sign up for more newsletters here

Patrick Kennedy said he saw in Trump's victory a signal that the political class wasn't representing many Americans, and said many of the regions that voted for Trump are struggling with high rates of suicide and overdoses. Democrats can appeal to those voters by talking about topics such as economic justice and building stronger communities, he said.

''I don't think we need to demonize Donald Trump to do that. I think we can win by talking about a vision of our country being stronger,'' he said. ''It's not as if the Democratic Party can't be the party of those that voted for Donald Trump.''

Part of that is highlighting the great things about the American system, such as its strong constitutional law, he said.

Advertisement

''It's not an authoritarian type approach. It is a democratic approach,'' he said. ''We're not an authoritarian country.''

Harkening back to Trump's campaign slogan, ''Make America Great Again,'' Kennedy said the focus should be on the nation's institutions.

''I think there's something really powerful that can come out from all of this. I think there's a hunger in America for renewal of our faith in this country,'' he said. ''I think this very turbulent time may allow us to look back and see what really is great about this country.''

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Why Is Chuck Grassley Tweeting At Donald Trump?

By Ed O'Keefe

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) has raised eyebrows before with his tweeting habits (remember the dead deer?), but messages posted this weekend on more serious subjects captured our attention.

Iowa's senior senator kicked things off Saturday afternoon by trying to draw President Trump's attention to the issues of government transparency and democracy in Russia.

MaryGraham in"Presidents'Secrets" says govt classification is used 2conceal blunders,protect careers&buttress agency goalsSO DRAIN THE SWAMP

— ChuckGrassley (@ChuckGrassley) February 11, 2017

Whoever monitors twitter at WH for Pres Trump get on subject of my immediate tweet and stop overclassification & start declassifying

— ChuckGrassley (@ChuckGrassley) February 11, 2017

Whoever monitors twitter at WH for President Trump read my previous 2tweets and hv this businessman understand TRANSPARENCY=ACCOUNTABILITY

— ChuckGrassley (@ChuckGrassley) February 11, 2017

In these messages, Grassley appears to be referring to a book by Mary Graham, called "Presidents' Secrets: The Use and Abuse of Hidden Power." Graham is co-director of the Transparency Policy Project at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and has written on the subject of government openness and secrecy in the past.

Grassley is no stranger to issues of government transparency and secrecy, having used his perch on the Senate Judiciary Committee in the past to force the disclosure of information from the Obama administration on a variety of matters, especially the "Fast and Furious" gun-running operation. He also has been a longtime ally of federal inspectors general and the work they do to investigate waste, fraud and abuse or the struggles they face in obtaining information from agency bosses.

The subject Grassley was tweeting about on Sunday morning seemed especially timely.

Whoever monitors twitter at WH tell Pres Trump to ask Putin"What do u hv agst ElectionOpponents bc they are killed/imprisoned/poisoned?"

— ChuckGrassley (@ChuckGrassley) February 12, 2017

A spokeswoman clarified Sunday that Grassley is "looking for President Trump to encourage democratic principles and fair elections in Russia."

But did Grassley raise the issue himself when he had lunch with Trump and other senators at the White House last Thursday? And why did he tweet about this now? Did it have something to do with recent reports about national security adviser Michael Flynn and his interactions with top Russian officials?

Grassley's spokeswoman wouldn't say.

"He said it would promote democracy for Trump to make those points to Putin. Might not result in a lot of change but promoting democracy is important. That's really it," she added by email.

Why the senator didn't directly troll Trump by using @RealDonaldTrump in his tweets is unclear. (We'll give him a pass and presume maybe he's not familiar with the "mentions" concept.) Still, the idea that a long-serving senator and powerful party broker would feel the need to tweet "Whoever monitors twitter at WH …" to his approximately 112,000 followers (including many reporters) is a signal of how disconnected many Republican lawmakers still feel from the new administration.

Later, Grassley asked the White House about another matter:

Whoever monitors twitter at WH for businessman president Trump "when is WH going to be opened for public tours?" Mrs G wants to know

— ChuckGrassley (@ChuckGrassley) February 12, 2017

This is a less serious but notable issue of concern, especially to congressional offices, which get inundated daily by requests for assistance from constituents seeking tickets to the White House or other Washington tourist destinations.

The White House has been mostly closed to the public since Inauguration Day, keeping with the tradition of shuttering the residence during a presidential transition to give the new first family some time to settle in. But requests for tours have been backlogged in recent weeks with first lady Melania Trump taking longer than anticipated to hire top aides who work with the National Park Service to field the requests and schedule tours. Melania Trump filled out her top staff just last week.

ACLU Is Seeing A Trump-era Surge In Members And Donations

By Larry Neumeister And Michael R. Sisak

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

NEW YORK (AP) – The nearly century-old American Civil Liberties Union says it is suddenly awash in donations and new members as it does battle with President Donald Trump over the extent of his constitutional authority, with nearly $80 million in online contributions alone pouring in since the election.

That includes a record $24 million surge over two days after Trump banned people from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States. The organization said its membership has more than doubled since the election to a record of nearly 1.2 million, and its Twitter following has tripled.

"It feels like we're drinking from a fire hydrant," said ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero, adding that the election has brought immigration, refugee, reproductive, civil and voting rights "to a high boil."

"What's really heartening is people are paying attention. They're aware of the crisis on the horizon," he said. "There's a real sense of urgency."

After Trump's election, the ACLU greeted the age of Trump on its website and magazine with a fresh slogan: "See you in court." That was the same expression Trump used in his tweeted response to a federal appeals court's decision refusing to reinstate the travel ban.

The ACLU has won court orders in New York, Massachusetts and Maryland against the president's travel ban. It has also filed a Freedom of Information Act request for documents on the billionaire's potential conflicts of interest. And it intends to bring a legal challenge accusing him of violating the Constitution's Emoluments Clause by accepting payments from foreign governments at his hotels and other properties.

Trump has defended the travel ban as critical to keeping America safe, saying terrorists could otherwise slip into the country. He predicted the courts will eventually find his order constitutional. Also, Trump's business empire has said it will donate profits from any foreign governments that use his hotels.

The ACLU said it has raised $79 million online from nearly 1 million individuals since the election. It had no immediate figures for contributions made by other means.

The boost to the ACLU's $220 million budget will allow it to spend more on its state operations, which Romero said became critical after some legislatures took Trump's election as a license to promote anti-immigrant, anti-civil rights and anti-abortion legislation.

The 1,150-employee ACLU also plans to hire more lawyers and staff in New York and Washington and spend $13 million more on citizen engagement, including protests and lobbying. That is a new front for an organization that has primarily been a policy and legal group.

Sheryl Douglas, receptionist at the ACLU's New York City headquarters since 1972, has been collecting some of the recent emails, letters and postcards.

"Sic 'em! Thanks!" read one.

"We commend your heroic efforts," said another.

"You give me hope," yet another said.

Among the new donors was Andrew Mcdonald, 52, of Odessa, Missouri.

"I'm ashamed to say I haven't donated to any organizations in the past," he said. "But things haven't felt so threatening before either. ... This time I felt like I couldn't just sit here and do nothing."

Another donor, Steve Berke, 35, of Miami Beach, Florida, said: "I think the ACLU is going to be a huge thorn in the side of the Trump administration. Trump has already demonstrated that he has a thin skin when it comes to anyone challenging his authority or power, but I'm confident that the ACLU will fight to protect American civil liberties."

Over the years, the ACLU has been bitterly criticized for taking up unpopular causes, such as defending the rights of neo-Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan to demonstrate.

Geraldine Engel, ACLU deputy development director, said the recent outpouring has been heartening. "We were always unpopular, misunderstood," she said.

The ACLU was born in 1920 when a small group of idealists challenged then-Attorney General Mitchell Palmer's order that thousands of people branded foreign anarchists or communists be arrested without warrants. Many were deported.

Soon the organization was defending people's constitutional rights to due process, privacy and freedom of assembly, speech and religion and looking out for society's vulnerable, including minorities, women, gay and transgender people, immigrants, prisoners and the disabled.

In 1925, ACLU lawyers helped defend John Scopes, a schoolteacher prosecuted for teaching evolution in Tennessee. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the ACLU protested the detention of 110,000 Japanese-Americans in camps.

In the 1950s, it joined the NAACP to fight segregation in public schools. And it had a role in the 1973 Supreme Court ruling legalizing abortion.

More recently, it helped persuade the Supreme Court in 2003 to strike down a Texas law outlawing gay sex and forced the government after 9/11 to divulge information about torture and the National Security Agency's surveillance of Americans.

Esha Bhandari, an ACLU attorney in New York, said the public's reaction lately is encouraging to those who gave up bigger salaries to work for the nonprofit organization.

"This is why we're here," said the Columbia Law School graduate. "The importance comes into sharp relief. We exist for moments like this. Lives are on the line."

Sisak reported from Philadelphia.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

From Protests To 'Pussy Hats,' Trump Resistance Brews Online

By Barbara Ortutay, AP Technology Writer

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

NEW YORK (AP) – The revolution may not be televised – but it apparently will be tweeted. And Facebooked. And Instagrammed.

Not long after President Donald Trump temporarily barred most people from seven majority-Muslim countries from entering the U.S., social activist Dex Torricke-Barton took to Facebook. "I'm thinking of organizing a rally," he posted. Within a few hours, more than 1,000 people expressed interest. The resulting protest a week later, in front of San Francisco's City Hall, drew thousands more.

Torricke-Barton is far from alone. From organizing protests on the fly to raising money for refugee and immigrant rights groups, people have been using social media to fuel the resistance against Trump in ways their organizing predecessors from the 1960s could have hardly imagined.

ROOTS OF PROTEST

In Queens, New York, for instance, a group of 27 women met up to write postcards to their state and local representatives during a "Postcard-Writing Happy Hour" organized through Facebook.

And on Ravelry, the social network for knitters and crocheters, members have been trading advice and knitting patterns for the pink "pussy hats" that emerged as a symbol during the Women's March on Washington and similar protests elsewhere after Trump's inauguration.

"This is an incredible project because it's mixed between digital and physical," says Jayna Zweiman, one of

the founders of the Pussyhat Project. "We harnessed social media for good."

In 1969, activists planned massive marches around the U.S. to protest the war in Vietnam. The protests, called the Moratorium, drew millions of people around the world. But "it took months, a lot of effort, a national office of the organization to get it off the ground," says Christopher Huff, a Beacon College professor focused on social movements of the 1960s. "The women's march was achieved at a much larger scale at a fraction of the time."

This immediacy is both an asset and a disadvantage. While online networks help people rally quickly around a cause, Huff says, they don't necessarily help people grasp the "long-term effort" required to sustain a movement.

ONLINE, THEN OFF

In Silicon Valley and across the tech world, Trump's travel ban created a stir that went well beyond the industry's usual calls for deregulation and more coding classes for kids. Between aggregating donations, issuing fiery statements, and walking out of work in protest, tech company executives and employees took up the anti-Trump cause at a scale not seen in other industries.

New York-based Meetup, for instance, broke with nearly 15 years of helping people form and join interest groups on a non-partisan basis. "We're vital plumbing for democracy," the company wrote in a Medium post this week. "But after Donald Trump's order to block people on the basis of nationality and religion, a line had been crossed."

So Meetup held a company-wide "resist-a-thon" – a riff on the hackathons tech companies hold to devise new technologies – to help people get involved in the anti-Trump movement known as "the resistance." It then unveiled more than 1,000 new "#resist" Meetup groups that people can join for free (it's normally $15 a month to run a group). As of Wednesday, some 35,000 people had joined the #resist Meetup groups, and scheduled 625 events around the world.

Torricke-Barton, who in earlier incarnations wrote speeches for Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Alphabet Chairman Eric Schmidt, said he and two sisters of Iranian descent organized their last-minute protest using Facebook groups and Messenger. That's quite a contrast to Torricke-Barton's earlier experience protesting violence in Darfur more than a decade ago.

Back then, "lawyers, marketers, communications people would help you get (the protests) off the ground ... networks had to be created in advance," he said. "Now, protests can start without any kind of infrastructure."

FOLLOW THE MONEY

Shortly after Trump's order, the venture capitalist Bijan Sabet tweeted a link to the fundraising platform Crowdrise alongside an explanation of his support for the American Civil Liberties Union- and then asked his followers to do the same.

Sabet figured it might take as long as two months to reach his $50,000 goal. It took three days. That weekend, the ACLU raised $24 million, far more than the $4 million it receives in a typical year.

Sabet, whose father is from Iran, says he's seeing civic involvement "level up," and that social media is pushing that along. Previously, he said, people would maybe say, "yeah, I'm a bit frustrated, but I don't have all the information, I don't know how to get involved." Now, there's no excuse.

LITTLE THINGS

The effects of social media aren't limited to huge efforts.

A week or so after the election, Marisa Frantz, an art director in Cerrillos, New Mexico, teamed up with her sister-in-law Sarah Bailey Hogarty to create a private Facebook group called "America is Watching." To join, all people had to do was comment "yes." If they then posted their zip code in comments, Frantz would send them contact information for their senators and representative, Hogarty explained in an email.

"Like many of us, I was floundering around feeling terrible and afraid," said Hogarty, a digital producer for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. "I wanted to do something, but I had no idea where to start."

Hogarty called the group her "foothold to resistance." Now, the group has more than 1,000 members across the U.S. and organizes weekly "calls to action," such as contacting senators and representatives about a particular issue determined by a poll of the group.

Groups like this demonstrate how social media has helped "lower the barrier to entry" into social activism, in the words of Tarun Banerjee, a sociology professor at the University of Pittsburgh.

"What social media can do really well is spread awareness," Banerjee said. "Can people make President Trump back down because of social media? Probably not. But it can shine the light."

Reach Barbara Ortutay on Twitter at https://twitter.com/BarbaraOrtutay

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Gillibrand Says She Won't Be Running Against Trump In 2020

By Marisa Schultz

New York Post, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON – There won't be another female senator from New York running for the White House soon.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand said she has no plans to follow in her successor's footsteps and challenge President Donald Trump in 2020.

"No, I am running for Senate. I'm running for Senate in 2018," she told John Catsimatidis Sunday on his radio show "Cats Roundtable" on 970 AM in New York. "And I really love my job and I feel like I can make a huge difference for New Yorkers, fighting for them."

Gillibrand, 50, was appointed to the senate seat of Hillary Clinton when she became Secretary of State and was elected by New Yorkers in a special election in 2010 and to a full term in 2012.

She was an outspoken backer for Clinton and has since become a vocal critic of President Trump, gaining progressive praise for voting against almost all of his cabinet picks. She voted in favor of Nikki Haley for United Nations ambassador.

"Unfortunately, a lot of these nominees are either ill-prepared or inexperienced or really on the very, very right ideologically, Gillibrand said. "And so, for most of them, I voted no."

With President Obama out of office and Clinton out of the limelight after a two-time defeat for the White House, Democrats are looking for their future leadership.

Along with Gillibrand, 2020 prospects have included Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The White House is also viewing other outspoken critics as potential contenders, The Post reported: Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper and Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban.

Meanwhile, Gillibrand continues to be a champion for women's rights and has recently reintroduced legislation to create a universal, gender neutral paid family and medial leave program.

"We need to have a national policy where any family member can take time off for a family emergency by having a national insurance plan," Gillibrand said.

Evan Falchuk, Former Independent Candidate, Switches To Democratic Party

By Nestor Ramos

Boston Globe, February 12, 2017

Evan Falchuk, whose 2014 run for governor put the political party he founded on the Massachusetts map, is now a Democrat, eschewing his third party in favor of a coordinated effort to combat President Trump's agenda.

Falchuk said he filed paperwork to enroll in the Democratic Party last week. He declined to say whether he will once again seek elected office in 2018, when Governor Charlie Baker, a Republican, is up for reelection.

Falchuk, who spent nearly five years seeking to build the United Independent Party from the ground up, described the decision as a response to the challenges posed by the new presidential administration — urgent threats to civil liberties and fiscal responsibility, he said, that third parties are not equipped to handle.

"Politics has changed. It's really time to take sides," Falchuk said in a telephone interview. "We don't have the luxury of spending decades to build a new political party."

An entrepreneur and health care executive, Falchuk, 47, sought to shake up the political establishment when he mounted a risky third-party campaign for governor in 2014. By winning more than 3 percent of the statewide vote, Falchuk made the United Independent Party one of four recognized major parties in Massachusetts, along with the Democratic, Republican, and Green-Rainbow parties.

Falchuk's vote total — more than 70,000, statewide — was far larger than the gap between Baker and Democratic nominee Martha Coakley, leading some to wonder whether he had enabled the Republican's victory.

With Falchuk as chairman, the United Independent Party billed itself as modern, progressive, and "fiscally sane." The combination of social progressivism and economic responsibility better reflected the sensibilities of a majority of Massachusetts voters, Falchuk said.

But the party fell well short of the required voter registrations to maintain official party status in 2016 and once again became a "political designation." A handful of UIP-endorsed candidates never came close to winning seats.

Falchuk arrives as a high-profile member of the Democratic Party at a time when area elected officials appear to be embracing their new roles as leaders of the opposition to Trump. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, Representative Seth Moulton, Attorney General Maura Healey, and Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh have all made waves well beyond Massachusetts for their full-throated criticism of Trump. And Baker, who all but washed his hands of the presidential race, offered his support of Healey's challenge to Trump's immigration ban.

Though Falchuk was viewed by some as a spoiler in the 2014 race, state Democratic Party chairman Gus Bickford welcomed the convert unequivocally in a statement Sunday.

"We welcome Evan's ideas and leadership to the party and look forward to working with him and party members — new and old — in our fight against the regressive Republican agenda at the state and national level," Bickford said.

Falchuk said he hopes to help reshape the Democratic Party as one that speaks to "working people" and understands that the country is divided less along left/right ideological lines than it is along class lines.

"That spectrum is not where it's at right now. It's about class," said Falchuk, who outlined his reasoning in an op-ed

in CommonWealth Magazine on Sunday. "Trump figured that out. Bernie Sanders figured that out."

Coming up with a real plan, Falchuk said, will be critical.

"It's got to have a vision of what comes next," Falchuk said. "It can't just be a party that says, 'Donald Trump is bad.' "

Falchuk, the chief executive officer of VillagePlan, a startup that helps people navigate elder care systems, did not rule out a future run for office.

In November, Falchuk expressed openness to the idea of running against Massachusetts Secretary of State William Galvin, who is also up for reelection in 2018.

"We certainly need something that will revive our democratic process, and he's not helping," Falchuk told MassLive at the time.

Galvin had drawn the ire of Falchuk and the United Independent Party in November, when he told the Democratic National Convention that voters shouldn't waste their ballots on third-party candidates.

Galvin's spokesman did not return a message Sunday, but a run by Falchuk would mean a primary contest against an incumbent in a race that rarely captures much attention.

The Democratic field for governor, however, appears open.

Only Jay Gonzalez, former state secretary of administration and finance, has announced his candidacy. Several heavy hitters have already said they don't plan to run, including Warren and Walsh, though potential candidates who have not ruled out a run include Newton Mayor Setti Warren and even former secretary of state and presidential candidate John Kerry.

G.O.P. Lawmakers Like What They See In Trump. They Just Have To Squint.

By Jonathan Martin And Matt Flegenheimer

New York Times, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — Republican congressional aides have set their iPhones to flutter every time President Trump hurls a thunderbolt on Twitter. Senators nod politely at his false claims of mass voter fraud during private White House meetings. The congressional morning briefing literature now includes a rundown of overnight and early-morning social media missives from the commander in chief.

"It doesn't take that long to read 'em," said Senator Bob Corker, Republican of Tennessee.

After three weeks in the White House, Mr. Trump has made clear that he is going to continue promulgating conspiracy theories, flinging personal insults and saying things that are plainly untrue. And the Republican-controlled House and Senate seem to have made a collective decision: They will accommodate — not confront — his conduct as long as he signs their long-stalled conservative proposals on taxes, regulations and health care into law.

"There's a widely held view among our members that, yes, he's going to say things on a daily basis that we're not going to like," said Senator John Thune of South Dakota, the third-ranking Senate Republican, "but that the broad legislative agenda and goals that we have — if we can stay focused on those and try and get that stuff enacted — those would be big wins."

Such accommodation is coming at a price, attracting incredulous or angry constituents to town hall meetings, leaving members flat-footed when presented with the latest presidential provocation and testing the capacity of now perpetually clogged phone lines on Capitol Hill.

Some of this would have happened under any Republican president — lawmakers were quick to note the ferocity of protests under President George W. Bush. But much of it is unique to Mr. Trump, whose rampaging presidency has spurred uncommon civic engagement even in deep-red districts.

"What is your line in the sand?" a retired Utah teacher demanded last week of Representative Jason Chaffetz, the Republican chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, who slogged through a jeer-heavy forum back home.

But at least for now, that is a price Republicans seem willing to pay. In effect, congressional Republicans have sought to compartmentalize Mr. Trump's presidency, adopting a cafeteria-style approach. They reach for the more appealing offerings, such as the Supreme Court nominee, Judge Neil M. Gorsuch, and avert their gaze from less appetizing or, to some, downright indefensible elements (America is not so different from Vladimir V. Putin's Russia), which would have surely drawn relentless rebukes if uttered by President Barack Obama.

Some lawmakers take comfort knowing that the president's behavior last year didn't hurt their campaigns, and they have used the electoral result as a justification unto itself, suggesting — as Mr. Trump has constantly — that his campaign success validates his approach.

"He's a unique personality, to be sure," acknowledged Senator John Cornyn of Texas, the Republican whip. "But he's gotten this far the way he is, and I think that probably leads him to think, well, it's working for him so far, so why change?"

And Republican lawmakers do not mind?

"As long as we're able to get things done," Mr. Cornyn said.

Individual Republican senators have criticized the president in mostly isolated cases, none more vocally than Senator John McCain of Arizona, who blasted the president's comparison between Mr. Putin's extrajudicial killings and American conduct, and recently expressed concerns about a

FOIA CBP 000917

military raid in Yemen that resulted in the death of an American commando and multiple civilians.

Often, the president has taken note — in brushback pitches that serve as warnings, if not to Mr. McCain, then to lawmakers who might emulate him.

"He's been losing so long he doesn't know how to win anymore," Mr. Trump wrote of Mr. McCain on Twitter on Thursday morning, calling to mind Mr. Trump's suggestion during the campaign that Mr. McCain was not a war hero because he had been captured in combat.

Hours later, Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader, went to the Senate floor and lamented the attacks on Mr. McCain and other Republicans.

Senator Orrin G. Hatch, Republican of Utah, then followed — and seemed far less bothered.

"I personally wish he would choose his words a little more carefully," Mr. Hatch said of the president. "On the other hand, I kind of find him refreshing, that he doesn't take any guff from anybody."

Privately, lawmakers and members of their staffs have pleaded with Mr. Trump's inner circle for more discipline from the president and his White House.

"We might talk to the vice president, but certainly not for public attribution," Mr. Cornyn said of Vice President Mike Pence, who joins Senate Republicans once a week at their regular luncheons in the Capitol.

By and large, though, Republicans in Congress are treating Mr. Trump as an individual to be worked around in his own administration.

"I think we can get a lot done with the people around him," Mr. McCain said, dismissing policy pronouncements from Mr. Trump that often differ from "the day before."

Practically patting Mr. Trump on the head, Senator Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee, said, "If he pays attention to people like General Kelly when he's doing a travel restriction and if he appoints people like Neil Gorsuch when he's making appointments, he'll be rewarded for that by all the praise, and maybe he'll do more of it." (Former Gen. John F. Kelly is the Homeland Security secretary.)

In hopes of repairing their relationship with Congress after the botched rollout of the travel ban, Mr. Trump's aides have aggressively courted congressional Republicans. In addition to Mr. Pence's making weekly visits, Marc Short, Mr. Trump's chief legislative liaison, has already become ubiquitous in the Capitol.

And powerful senators are enjoying significant attention: Mr. McCain, the Armed Services Committee chairman, said he had already had three conversations with Michael T. Flynn, the national security adviser, and a breakfast with Jim Mattis, the defense secretary. Mr. Hatch, who is chairman of the Finance Committee, had a 90-minute meeting with Mr. Trump in the White House. And Mr. Alexander, the chairman of the health and education panel, was invited to the White House last Thursday for lunch with Mr. Trump.

Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, said there was "a high level of satisfaction" with the new White House, insisting that members cared little about "the daily tweets."

The deflection is bicameral. When a reporter recently noted that the House speaker, Paul D. Ryan, had often declined to weigh in on the "tweet of the day," Mr. Ryan lit up.

"You got my talking points down already!" he said, before gently fielding a question about Mr. Trump's attacks on the federal judge who halted his travel ban.

"Look, he's not the first president to get frustrated with a ruling from a court," Mr. Ryan said with a shrug.

While the détente between an anti-establishment president and its establishment-aligned leaders on Capitol Hill may seem wholly transactional, some Republicans say the fury on the left toward Mr. Trump along with the denunciations from many news outlets has helped forge his bond with the voters that he and congressional Republicans share, particularly in the conservative-dominated House.

When the president addressed congressional Republicans at their retreat in Philadelphia last month, Mr. Trump's aside about news coverage — "nothing fair about the media," he said with a sneer — earned perhaps the most enthusiastic applause.

"While it may upset The New York Times, Hollywood, the cast of 'Hamilton' and the groups marching in the streets, it is not upsetting to the constituents that elected these members and senators," Sam Geduldig, a Republican lobbyist, said of Mr. Trump's behavior. "There is a feeling that if those groups are against you, you're doing the right thing."

More skeptical Republicans believe that lawmakers are deluding themselves if they treat Mr. Trump as a normal president — quirky but tolerable, like a colorful uncle at Thanksgiving dinner.

"They're mostly ignoring him, humoring him occasionally while the rest of the family gets along fine, enjoys the turkey and watches the game," said William Kristol, the former editor of The Weekly Standard. "But he's not just a bit player or a guest. He's the president."

And in the Capitol, he can never be ignored for long.

Strolling to a meeting last week, Mr. Corker was asked about the latest Trump controversy: The president had just attacked the retailer Nordstrom for dropping his daughter Ivanka's accessories and clothing line.

The senator flashed a broad smile.

"Did he really?" he asked.

In Contrast With Trump, Governors Pitch Optimism

By Reid Wilson, Chase Masters And Owen Eagan

The Hill, February 12, 2017

In his inaugural address last month, President Donald Trump painted a grim picture of a crime-ridden America littered with rusted-out factories, picked clean by corrupt politicians.

But in states across the nation, governors used their annual addresses to legislators to illustrate sunny portraits of recovery and renewal. Virtually every governor who has assessed their progress and laid out a vision for the future said the state of their state is positive, a review of speeches given so far shows.

"The state of the state isn't just strong, it is on the rise," Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey (R) told legislators.

"Wisconsin's future is bright, but we're not done yet," Gov. Scott Walker (R) said.

"The state of the state of Hawaii is sound and full of possibilities," Gov. David Ige (D) said.

"The state of our state is getting stronger every day," said Rhode Island's Gina Raimondo (D).

It behooves governors to tout their accomplishments and the foundation on which they have set their states. But seven years after the depths of the worst recession in nearly a century, governors addressing legislators this year have plenty of positive statistics on which to rely.

Colorado has added 400,000 jobs since John Hickenlooper (D) took office. More people are employed in Wisconsin, Indiana, Minnesota and Montana than ever before. Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) touted the lowest unemployment rate his state has had in 15 years. Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker (R) said welfare caseloads have dropped by a quarter.

And after years of tight budgets and painful cuts, some states are beginning to reinvest, especially in schools and state workforces.

"Governors are executives and have a different view of the world than D.C.-based legislators," said Colm O'Comartun, a Democratic lobbyist who deals with state legislators across the country. "Even though state budget officers have noted tightening budgets overall, many states are still producing positive programs."

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal (R) asked legislators to give state employees a raise. Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb (R) asked for a $1 billion innovation and entrepreneurship fund. Hickenlooper called for new transportation and infrastructure spending, and Ige asked for $700 million for new school construction.

Most governors used their addresses to lay out proposals they would pursue during legislative sessions now underway.

In Arizona, Ducey asked legislators to require a single minimum wage across the state, warning that allowing municipalities and counties to set their own wages would lead to "California-style chaos." Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchison (R) called for broad-based tax reform. Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner (R), who has been locked in a budget fight with the Democratic-led legislature for most of his first term, called for a balanced budget.

But governors warned that not all is sunny, especially as an increasing number of states turn their attention to an opioid epidemic that has killed thousands of Americans. Governors in at least eight states spent significant portions of their addresses detailing the crisis, and potential solutions.

"The tragedy of the statewide prescription drug and opioid crisis has awakened us. We need to translate this awakening into collaborative action," North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum (R) said, just days after taking office last month.

"Tackling this problem is a matter of life and death for people in every corner of Virginia," Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) told lawmakers.

Some governors warned that revenue estimates and collections hint at more economic trouble ahead. Gov. Terry Branstad (R), addressing the Iowa legislature for the final time before he leaves to become Trump's ambassador to China, said revenue estimates are falling. Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin (R) called for new taxes on a broad range of services.

"A slow growth economy with declining real incomes foreshadows a very uncertain future for many Minnesotans and other Americans," cautioned Gov. Mark Dayton (D).

Though Trump invoked what he called "American carnage," only a small handful of governors even touched on crime in their states. FBI statistics show crime rates are at or near all-time lows; fewer violent crimes were committed in 2015 than in 1981, even though the American population has grown by 100 million over the intervening three decades.

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez (R) was one who did mention crime. The former prosecutor, serving her second term as governor, asked the legislature to pass a new three-strikes law and a law implementing the death penalty. She is unlikely to succeed in a Democratic-led legislature.

Governors from both parties acknowledged the new reality of Trump's administration and the likely changes to come. Many referred to the Affordable Care Act, which has pumped billions of dollars into state coffers and is likely to be overhauled by Republicans in Congress.

Some Democrats were defiant, pledging to maintain coverage for the thousands of low-income residents who had been enrolled in state Medicaid programs under President Obama's signature domestic legislative achievement.

"We will fight and keep fighting to protect the 750,000 Washingtonians who finally have health insurance, thanks to the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion," Gov. Jay Inslee (D) said in Olympia. In Sacramento, California Gov. Jerry Brown (D) warned repealing the ACA would cost his state billions of dollars.

Legislators "must prepare for very uncertain times," he said.

Republicans largely embraced the pending legislative onslaught, which they said vindicated their warnings about ObamaCare's costs.

"Promises of limitless 'free' money from Washington to cover expanded populations were never going to be kept," Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback (R), who declined to expand Medicaid coverage, told his legislature. "Kansas was right. Kansas should stay the course."

Some governors took the occasion to offer a window into their own lives, away from the public spotlight. Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval (R) said he had spent the last year visiting every park in the Silver State. Michigan's Snyder admitted he went "elk bugling."

And many governors reached to the past to offer wisdom and inspiration. Three governors quoted Abraham Lincoln, and three more cited John F. Kennedy. Deal quoted Georgia songwriter Johnny Mercer, while Holcomb invoked Gene Krantz, NASA's director of the Apollo missions. Steve Bullock (D), the governor of Montana, paraphrased nine of his predecessors, including one who governed Montana when it was a territory.

Only one governor — Colorado's Hickenlooper — said he had considered skipping his annual State of the State address. Instead, Hickenlooper said, he thought about addressing the legislature by tweet storm.

Democrats At Retreat Seem To Relish A Shifting Of Responsibility

By Emmarie Huetteman

New York Times, February 12, 2017

BALTIMORE — There is something liberating about not being in charge.

House Democrats seemed jovial, occasionally even buoyant, last week as more than 140 members of their caucus gathered for a retreat in a hotel overlooking Baltimore's Inner Harbor, unencumbered by the raucous protests and heavy expectations that followed Republicans to their own retreat in Philadelphia two weeks ago.

As some of their conservative colleagues received a battering at town hall meetings back home over issues like their plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Democrats tried not to look too pleased with the consolation prize from a bruising election: It is not their problem anymore.

"What they're realizing is that disaster, that marketplace chaos which would result from repealing and replacement, is going to be blamed on them," Representative Frank Pallone Jr. of New Jersey, the top Democrat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said of Republicans and their proposals for the health law. "And they can't blame us for it anymore."

Eight years ago, it was Democrats who settled into a defensive crouch as they weathered their own town hall gatherings, fending off criticism from Republicans and the nascent Tea Party movement.

But with the transfer of power from President Barack Obama to President Trump last month, giving Republicans control of both the White House and Congress, came the transfer of responsibility. Republicans who spent the Obama years casting symbolic votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act, knowing they would die on the Resolute Desk, are now wrestling with the monumental challenge of actually producing a comprehensive replacement.

For House Democrats, the immediate challenges are less pressing. Any debate about whether to cooperate with the weeks-old Trump administration is strictly hypothetical, as Mr. Trump has yet to push for any legislative priorities, such as his promised trillion-dollar infrastructure plan.

"He's a sideshow," said Representative Eric Swalwell of California. "Until he shows he wants to work for the American people, he's irrelevant."

Spared the pressure to emerge with a detailed policy plan, Democrats arrived in an unseasonably warm Baltimore on Wednesday, tumbling off coach buses onto which they had been assigned alphabetically like schoolchildren on an outing. After hours of discussions, they scattered for late-afternoon excursions on Thursday to the aquarium, the art museum or the deserted ballpark. They took selfies on Friday with Chelsea Handler, the outspoken comedian, who closed out their retreat.

There was time for semantic debates: It was not a "retreat," leaders insisted, because they are not "in retreat."

"Joe aptly named the retreat — issues conference, pardon me, I stand corrected," said Representative Linda T. Sánchez of California, vice chairwoman of the House Democratic Caucus, referring to the chairman, Representative Joe Crowley of New York.

"Joe aptly named the issues conference 'Fighting for All Americans,'" Ms. Sánchez started again with a mischievous look. "I kind of dubbed it in my own language as 'Kicking a Little Ass for the Working Class.'"

("Yea!" Representative Nancy Pelosi of California, the Democratic leader, interjected, clapping and laughing.)

There was occasion for jokes: Asked about the strategy sessions, Mr. Crowley made a playful reference to Mr. Trump's effort at his first news conference as president to demonstrate that he had separated himself from his companies.

"We're going to bring in the pallets with all the stacks of paper of the strategy, coming in now," he said.

And there was ample opportunity to reflect on the election that delivered Mr. Trump his surprising victory — though it did gain them a handful of seats, as they are quick to point out — and a strategy for capitalizing on Mr. Trump's

missteps and pulling themselves out of the minority in the House, where they have been relegated since 2011.

With appearances by a handful of activists, including Tamika Mallory, one of the organizers of the Women's March on Washington, Democrats contemplated how they could prevent people from becoming desensitized or disheartened by a near-constant flow of contentious moves by the White House.

But others talked about how to reach out to those who may not feel compelled to wave signs on the National Mall. Representative Cheri Bustos, whose northwestern Illinois district Mr. Trump narrowly won, said Democrats understood the concerns about wage stagnation, student loan debt and other economic issues that drove people to vote for him. But she said she worried about Democrats' ability to communicate with those voters.

"For God's sake, we cannot talk down to people," she said.

By Friday morning, even as they applauded an appeals court ruling that upheld the suspension of Mr. Trump's executive order on immigration, Democratic leaders struck a sober note. Mr. Crowley said that while Democrats could be inclined to sit back and let Mr. Trump be hoisted with his own petard, "people's lives are at stake."

"Look, if he's had a road-to-Damascus experience, an epiphany, knocked from his horse and seeing a bright light — I'm not so sure I'll believe it yet, but maybe it's a start," Mr. Crowley said. "We'll see."

Centrist Senators' Clout Rises In Divided Chamber

By Erin Kelly And Eliza Collins

USA Today, February 12, 2017

WASHINGTON — At a time when angry tweets, bitter debates and dueling protests dominate the news, the most powerful people in the Senate may end up being the ones who know how to get along.

With Republicans holding a narrow 52-48 majority in the chamber, it will take bipartisan compromise to pass a new health care bill, lower taxes for middle-class families and create jobs. Most major bills need a super-majority of 60 votes to pass.

The senators who hold the key to consensus are a group of about a dozen or so pragmatic, independent-minded lawmakers from both parties who are already quietly working together in private offices and committee rooms to nudge the Senate beyond ideological battles to get things done.

"In a closely divided chamber, just three or four members can exercise disproportionate influence," said Jack Pitney, a politics professor at Claremont McKenna College in California. "They may not be what you would traditionally call moderate, but they're practical-minded senators who are willing to compromise, at least on certain issues. Serious legislators will look to them for help."

One of the biggest tests of the centrists' increased clout could come as the Republican majority in Congress tries to keep its promise to voters to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, better known as Obamacare.

GOP leaders who had confidently predicted they could jam through a bill in just a few months are beginning to realize that coming up with a new health care plan is not as easy as it seemed, and that they need help from Senate Democrats to do it, Pitney said.

"At some point down the road, we're going to need 60 votes to solve our health care problem, and most other major issues that affect people's lives in a big way," said Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and one of the pragmatists Pitney was describing.

Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Bob Corker, R-Tenn. is seen as a key centrist in the Senate. (Photo: J. Scott Applewhite, AP)

The crucial rule that independent-minded senators will play has been underscored in recent days by efforts to both court and target them.

On Thursday, President Trump invited a group of centrist senators to lunch at the White House. The invitees included Democratic Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Joe Donnelly of Indiana, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Jon Tester of Montana and Republican Sens. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia and Lamar Alexander of Tennessee.

Topics ranged from confirming Trump's nominees to tackling immigration reform, expanding Internet access to rural areas, and reducing opioid abuse.

"It wasn't all 'let's get together and hold hands and agree on everything,'" Capito said. "The main emphasis was how do we find common ground."

Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., said he believes Democrats and Republicans can agree on an overhaul of the nation's complicated tax code. Donnelly believes there can be compromise on trade policy that keeps American jobs from being shipped overseas. And Heitkamp said she can work with Republicans and the Trump administration on an energy policy that boosts clean coal technology and helps the miners in her state.

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., said senators from both parties have also been working together to pass small but significant bills, including legislation to prevent cruelty against animals and a bill to ensure that the money in the Crime Victims Fund actually goes to victims and does not become a government slush fund.

"It might seem like a small thing, but it's a very big thing for the victims," he said. "We're already building a record of modest successes."

While they search for a middle way, the centrists are being attacked, cajoled and pressured by interest groups from both ends of the political spectrum.

A critical vote will come this spring when the Senate votes on whether to confirm Neil Gorsuch, who is Trump's nominee for Supreme Court. Senate leaders need help from at least eight moderate Democrats to get the 60 votes needed to proceed to an up-or-down vote on Gorsuch. Failing that, leaders will need support from moderate Republicans if they decide to dramatically change Senate rules to allow Gorsuch to be confirmed with just 51 votes.

President Trump greets Delaware Democratic Sen. Chris Coons as Coons and other senators arrived at the White House to discuss his nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court on Feb. 9, 2017. (Photo: Nicholas Kamm, AFP/Getty Images)

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., said he has gotten flak from the left for voting to confirm Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and for "keeping an open mind" on Gorsuch. But Coons said his constituents want him to solve problems, not just block Republican bills and nominees.

"I'm trying to show that I'm not going to oppose everything that President Trump does," he said.

The bitterly partisan debates over the confirmation of Trump's nominees has created a higher-than-normal level of tension on Capitol Hill during the past few weeks, but senators said they expect things to calm down when the major Cabinet officers are confirmed and lawmakers can return to passing legislation.

The fierce fighting on the Senate floor hit its most dramatic point Tuesday when Republicans silenced liberal Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., after they charged that she had violated a rule barring senators from impugning the motives and conduct of a fellow senator. During the debate over whether to confirm Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., as Trump's attorney general, Warren had been reading aloud a1986 letter from civil rights leader Coretta Scott King that was deeply critical of Sessions. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., interrupted her and called a vote to silence her. Sessions was ultimately confirmed on a party-line vote.

"I know it seems very partisan right now with the nominations going through," said Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio. "But I think as that finishes up there's an opportunity to pull together and to get some things done with a group of members on both sides of the aisle who are actually interested in results. ... Our constituents are looking for results."

Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., said progress is already happening in Senate committees. Carper is the senior Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, where he said he and Chairman John Barrasso, R-Wyo., are working on legislation to create jobs by repairing and improving the nation's highways, bridges, airports and mass transit systems.

Corker said he believes legislation actually turns out better when neither party has a big majority and both sides are forced to work closely together.

"The solutions you come up with together will stand the test of time," he said. "They won't be undone when a different party takes control. They're solutions that the American people can rely on to last."

Bernie Sanders Cries Foul Over Canceled Town Hall Meeting In West Virginia

By David Weigel

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) is raising questions about the surprise cancellation of a town hall meeting in West Virginia, which was scheduled for Monday morning and to be filmed from a MSNBC special. In a statement, Sanders said that a National Guard armory that had been booked for the town hall had canceled without explanation, and that the network was unable to find a new venue on short notice.

"If anyone in West Virginia government thinks that I will be intimidated from going to McDowell County, West Virginia, to hold a town meeting, they are dead wrong," Sanders said in a statement. "If they don't allow us to use the local armory, we'll find another building. If we can't find another building, we'll hold the meeting out in the streets. That town meeting will be held. Poverty in America will be discussed. Solutions will be found."

The town hall meeting was set to be held in McDowell County, the poorest part of West Virginia, with the highest rate of drug overdose in the state and the lowest life expectancy of any county in the United States — 64 years. In November, Donald Trump won 74.1 percent of the vote in the county, but in the Democratic primary six months earlier, Sanders won 55.2 percent of the vote.

On Friday night, as first reported by the Charleston Gazette-Mail, MSNBC and Sanders learned that the armory would not be available for the town hall, which was to be moderated by host Chris Hayes. While the state National Guard and new Gov. Jim Justice (D-W.Va.) have not talked about the cancellation, people with knowledge of the event say it had been planned for weeks, and belatedly, they were told the venue could not host a political event.

Sanders said that "hundreds" of locals had signed up to attend the town hall.

"I want people to see, first hand, how poverty leads to terrible despair and that, in reality, how it is a death sentence for many," he said. "In McDowell County, one of the poorest areas in one of our poorest states, people are now living shorter lives than their parents. Unemployment is sky high, drug addiction is at an epidemic rate and the schools lack

FOIA CBP 000922

adequate funding. It is high time that we, as a nation, heard from the people who are impacted by this crisis and determined the best ways forward."

While Sanders would be in the state today and Monday, MSNBC would look for another time to film an event with Sanders. It scored a ratings hit in January with a Sanders town hall in Kenosha, Wis., a county that had voted Democratic for decades but flipped to Donald Trump last year.

"I'm disappointed, but I hope we can make it work in the future," said Hayes.

Former Presidential Candidates Eye Senate Comebacks

By Lisa Hagen

The Hill, February 12, 2017

A handful of former presidential candidates are testing the waters for 2018 Senate races.

Carly Fiorina, who ran for president in 2016, earlier this week expressed interest in challenging Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine, the former Democratic vice presidential nominee.

And in Utah, the GOP field could be lush with ex-presidential candidates if GOP Sen. Orrin Hatch retires. Jon Huntsman, a 2012 GOP candidate, could run for the seat, as could 2016 independent candidate Evan McMullin. Even Mitt Romney, the GOP's 2012 nominee, hasn't ruled anything out.

Former presidential candidates have a huge advantage coming into a Senate race, having already created a national profile and a fundraising network.

Utah's Senate race appears ripe for opportunity, even though Hatch, the longest-serving GOP senator in history, has kept his cards close to his chest about whether he'll retire at the end of his term in 2018.

Hatch is considering running for an eighth term, even though he previously said in 2012 that he'd retire in 2018. Potential Senate contenders have said their candidacy would be contingent on his decision, but Utah political observers expect a contested primary regardless.

"Utah's going to have an exciting primary race in 2018 for the Senate I'm very confident, no matter what," said Damon Cann, a political science professor at Utah State University.

"Whether Sen. Hatch is in or out, there are candidates who are scoping out opportunity and for a number of them, I think they will run whether Hatch stays in or out of race."

Huntsman, who ended his 2012 presidential bid after coming in third place in New Hampshire's primary, is considering a Senate bid. The former Utah governor and former ambassador to China is seen as a formidable opponent whose gubernatorial tenure was viewed favorably in the state.

While he has said in interviews said that his decision would be partially based off Hatch's decision, observers speculate that he'll mount a bid in any circumstance.

A poll from late January found that nearly 80 percent of Utah voters believe Hatch shouldn't run for another term. The survey, which was conducted for a Utah paper owned by the Huntsman family, also found Hatch trailing the former governor.

McMullin is viewed as another top contender in the state. His presidential candidacy emerged from the "Never Trump" movement, and he pitched himself as the alternative for voters who couldn't bring themselves to support Trump or Hillary Clinton.

While McMullin ended up coming in third in Utah, about 6 points behind Clinton, political observers say he is still viewed favorably in the state.

"If Trump actually loses popularity in the state of Utah, which is a hard thing to gauge, that could be a problem for Hatch and be helpful for McMullin," said Jim Curry, an assistant political science professor at University of Utah.

But any hopes for McMullin or Huntsman would likely be dashed if Romney were to get in the race, as he would almost certainly be the front-runner.

Ryan Williams, a former aide to Romney's presidential campaign, said while he hasn't spoken to Romney directly about a Senate bid, he'd be surprised if he jumped into the race.

"I would at this point be extremely surprised if the governor ran for Senate, but it's something he won't rule out because of his strong desire to explore all opportunities in public service," Williams said.

Romney has close ties in Utah and has frequently touted his time as CEO of the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympic Committee.

While he appears less likely to run, others in the state look to his son, Josh Romney, as a possible Senate candidate or potentially running for governor in 2020.

"He is the Romney to watch for the Senate election rather than Mitt," Cann said.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), chairman of the powerful House Oversight Committee, is also floated as a potential contender.

In Virginia, meanwhile, Fiorina told a local radio station that she is "certainly looking" at challenging Kaine. The former Hewlett-Packard CEO memorably feuded with Trump during the 2016 GOP primary and ended her bid after the New Hampshire primary. She joined Sen. Ted Cruz's (R-Texas) would-be presidential ticket and only backed Trump's bid less than two months out from the November election.

While the race is still early and the field has yet to take shape, there are a few other Republican names being floated for the Virginia race. GOP Rep. Barbara Comstock, who

recently won reelection to her swingy Northern Virginia seat, is considered a top contender.

"Without knowing what the full field looks like, [Fiorina's] got a good shot," said a Virginia political operative. She's a good campaigner."

Strategists point to her experience in the technology sector, which they say plays well in Northern Virginia. But they note that one roadblock Fiorina might face is reminding voters that she lives in the state. She has previously run for Senate in 2010 in California.

"After she ended her presidential campaign, she has been making rounds across the state and helping other candidates," the Virginia operative said. "She's getting her name out to the grassroots folks that would be helpful for her to propel her in the primary."

Conservative radio host Laura Ingraham is also mulling a run for the Senate seat after being considered for White House press secretary in Trump's administration. Rep. David Brat (R-Va.), who took himself out of the running for the Senate seat, praised Ingraham, according to the Washington Post.

Former Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore, who also unsuccessfully ran for the 2016 GOP nomination, is considering a run as well.

While the race for Virginia's Senate seat is considered competitive, Kaine would likely go in with a slight advantage, given Clinton's victory in the state and his own foray into vice presidential politics.

Kaine, a former Virginia governor and Richmond mayor, is popular in the state. But midterm elections usually yield lower voter turnout, especially among Democrats.

Strategists point to the unexpectedly close 2014 Senate race in the state where Republican Ed Gillespie almost knocked off Democratic Sen. Mark Warner.

"In Virginia, anything can happen," the operative said. "I think it's a tossup with slight advantage to Kaine probably. If it's Fiorina or Comstock, I think they have a really good shot."

Their Camp Turning Into A Pit Of Mud, Dakota Pipeline Protesters Face The Inevitable

By Joe Heim

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

CANNON BALL, N.D. — The main camp here, once home to thousands of Native Americans and their allies who gathered to protest the completion of the Dakota Access crude-oil pipeline, is quickly turning into a gooey pit of mud.

Unseasonably warm temperatures over the weekend melted giant mounds of snow, and many of the remaining 200 or so pipeline protesters — self-described "water protectors" — are gathering their possessions and making plans to get off the 80-acre property, which sits in a flood zone near the Missouri River. The rising waters, and a federal eviction notice for Feb. 22, have forced their hands.

Others say they will stay and fight the Army Corps of Engineers, which decided last week to allow completion of the 1,172-mile pipeline. After President Trump cleared the way, the corps granted an easement to Energy Transfer Partners to drill under a reservoir less than a mile from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's reservation. The drilling began last week.

The tribe has argued in court that this short stretch of the $3.8 billion pipeline threatens their water supply, crosses sacred burial grounds and violates long-standing treaties between the Native Americans and the federal government. But the path forward for the fight is unclear; many are pinning their hopes on court challenges, including one scheduled Monday in Washington seeking a temporary restraining order to stop the political — and actual — machinery. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has joined a motion by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe to halt the drilling.

Horses still run free in the camp. Small packs of dogs dart about, tussling in the snow, their barks drowned out by the incessant whine of a snowmobile that wends its way through the slushy mess. Everything is white, brown, gray. The only flashes of color come from weatherworn tribal flags, banners that were jubilantly raised last summer and now, some in tatters, snap to and fro in the ever-changing wind.

In the slurry running through camp are the remains of a mostly abandoned mini-city: an unopened packet of Top Ramen, a broken shovel, a mud-soaked glove, a pacifier.

One day soon, all of this will be gone: the tepees packed away, the yurts pulled down, the abandoned tents and sleeping bags and boxes of belongings scraped up by bulldozers into waiting dumpsters and hauled off to landfills.

The question for the camp's inhabitants and visitors and supporters is whether its dismantling becomes a catalyst for renewed Native American activism or fades into the hazy nostalgia of uprisings past.

Josh Dayrider, a member of the Blackfeet Nation of Montana, has been at the camp off and on since early last year. The 30-year-old isn't quite ready to leave, but he knows departure is inevitable.

"We're still in the fight," Dayrider said. "And we've accomplished something amazing. We woke the world up by showing how the oil companies treat the land and the people. We're still standing. We're still fighting."

Tanya Olsen stood next to her mini-camper, pulling out a mattress that had been soaked by rising waters.

"The plan is to stay until the last minute," said Olsen, a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. She arrived here in November. "I was never an activist. I knew very little about pipelines. But what really caught my attention was the mistreatment of the Natives here. I thought, I've got to go there. I need to stand with my people."

As she prepares to leave, Olsen says she takes solace from the impact the year-long protest has had on tribes.

"It has brought the people of all of our nations together," she said. "It has awoken the children, the seventh generation, and it has been a learning experience for us as culture. It's sad that they went and allowed them to drill, but this hasn't been all for nothing."

From across the camp, there's a yell: "Mni Wiconi!"

Loosely translated from the Lakota language, it means "water is life," and it has become the protesters' rallying cry. The yell is picked up and repeated from different corners of the camp for a minute or so, echoing up to a snowy bluff overlooking the encampment where state and local police sit in a fleet of law enforcement vehicles, monitoring comings and goings. Quiet returns.

For the Standing Rock tribe and its supporters, the decision to allow completion of the pipeline without a promised environmental impact study came as one more slap in the face. Particularly upsetting to Standing Rock Chairman David Archambault II was that he had traveled to Washington on Tuesday for a White House meeting with a Trump administration official the following day; he believed he would have one more chance to plead the tribe's case. But he arrived at Reagan National Airport to learn that final approval had been granted while he was en route.

The snub was a sharp insult to the tribe's 8,000 members. On Friday night at the Standing Rock High School gym in Fort Yates, 25 miles down the road from the protest camp, several hundred fans from the reservation gathered to watch the home Warriors girls basketball team take on the New Salem Holsteins.

Cheers and the squeak of sneakers filled the gym, where banners hang from the rafters touting the reservation's champion teams and athletes going back to the 1940s.

In the lobby, members of the Standing Rock high school band were holding a bake sale. Their teacher, Kim Warren, a tribal member, said she made regular visits to the main camp in the fall, believing the protest was a necessary and valuable one.

"We can't give up, especially with this new administration," said Warren, who has been teaching at the school for 18 years. "We can't give up. That's what I tell my students every day. Every struggle that they have, I tell them don't give up, keep going."

Despite assurances from the pipeline's owners that it is safe and is using the most advanced technology available, there is almost universal belief among Standing Rock tribal members that an accident is unavoidable and their drinking water will be contaminated.

"Pipelines break all the time," said Charles Bailey, 46, a tribal member, as he stood outside the gym. "Everybody knows that it's going to break at some point. At my age, I'm thinking about how is this going to affect our youth, my daughters."

As legal options dwindle and the prospect of a completed pipeline that could begin transporting more than 500,000 barrels of crude oil a day in two to three months appears more likely, its opponents are taking stock.

Dallas Goldtooth has been one of the leading voices of the protest, filing regular Facebook Live feeds to share the most recent developments. An environmental activist who is an Isanti Dakota from Minnesota, he wants supporters to know that their participation has not been in vain, no matter what the outcome.

"Some feel it is all or nothing, but we cannot adopt that frame of thinking," Goldtooth said. "We've seen defeat as indigenous people, but we still persist, we're still striving. Whether we get a win here or not, we've pushed the boulder down the hill and it's running. The fight never stops. It builds. It moves. It grows."

Some activists have called for more protesters to come out to the site, but the Standing Rock tribe has discouraged that, asking that opposition be directed at the local level and at a March 10 march planned for Native American rights in Washington.

The relationship between the camp's remaining inhabitants and the Standing Rock tribe has at times been prickly. The tribe welcomed the 200 or so Native tribes that gathered here in late summer and fall to help their cause, and it welcomed the national and international support that followed. But the ongoing protest, at times involving violent clashes with law enforcement from neighboring Morton County, has drained the tribe's attention and resources.

One of the reservation's leading sources of revenue, the Prairie Knights casino hotel and concert venue, has taken a financial hit as the main road between the casino and Bismarck — normally an hour's drive — has been blocked off by state police for months, forcing patrons to make a lengthier trip.

The ongoing protest also has strained an already tense relationship with Morton County law enforcement officials, who have arrested more than 700 protesters in recent months, including members of the Standing Rock tribe. And the unrest has led to a series of bills being introduced in the North Dakota legislature that create severe penalties for protest activities, a move that Amnesty International said "would undermine the rights to peaceful protest and freedom of expression."

Joe Plouff, 67, a former Wisconsin state representative and an Army veteran from Prairie View, Wis., stood outside of his tent near the entrance to the Sacred Stone camp, which sits across the frozen Cannonball River from the main camp. He's not hopeful at this point that the pipeline can be stopped, but since arriving here in December, he says he has drawn

inspiration from the movement and from the number of young people involved.

"Will they be demoralized if they lose this battle? Yes. Depressed? Yes? Hurt? Yes. But I see a lot of young people here and I think they will take it as a start," he said. "There's optimism because the Native Americans here have brought forward an issue that most of us have not paid attention to, and that is the safety of our water. They've taken a local issue and made it a national one."

Pentagon Launches Effort To Solve A Baffling WWII Mystery

By Chris Carola

Associated Press, February 12, 2017

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) – The Pentagon is launching efforts to solve a baffling World War II mystery: whether dozens of U.S. sailors listed as missing from a ship disaster were actually recovered and buried all along as unknowns in a New York cemetery.

More than 130 victims of the USS Turner's 1944 explosion and sinking near New York Harbor are still officially missing. But WWII researcher Ted Darcy found papers last year indicating at least four of them were buried as unknowns in a Long Island military cemetery. He believes the rest could be there too.

After The Associated Press initially reported on Darcy's findings in November, the Pentagon office responsible for recovering and identifying the nation's war dead said only that the records that could confirm exactly how many of the Turner's sailors are buried in the cemetery were missing.

But in recent days, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency said it is now "taking the steps to send out inquiries and conduct archival research" to try to locate the files associated with the Turner unknowns buried in the cemetery in Farmingdale on Long Island.

Darcy and loved ones of the missing crew members hope that the records could be found, identifications made and that the long-lost remains of the Turner be reburied in marked gravesites with full military honors.

"I'd like to see if we can have closure on this, find out who's in the graves," said Richard Duffy, a 61-year-old retired mechanic from Ballston Spa, New York, who was named after his fallen uncle.

The Turner, a 10-month-old Navy destroyer, sank off Sandy Hook, New Jersey, after a series of internal explosions on Jan. 3, 1944. The Navy never determined what caused the initial blast, but an inquiry found that munitions were being handled below deck around the time of the first explosion. Half of the nearly 300 men on board survived, but scores of others were killed and listed as missing. Some remains were recovered from the sunken wreckage during the yearlong salvage operation, but an exact number remains unknown.

Margaret Duffy Sickles was not quite 5 years old when her family in Whitehall, New York, received word that her brother, 18-year-old Fireman 1st Class Richard Duffy, was among the missing. After reading the AP story in November, she sought the help of New York congressional delegation, hoping it could persuade the Pentagon to make an attempt to identify the remains buried on Long Island.

"I will work with the families to cut through red tape and ensure that the Department of Defense's POW/MIA Accounting Agency does everything it can to try to properly identify these brave Americans," said U.S. Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer, a Democrat.

Sickles, of Kingston, said identifying any of the remains after 73 years would be difficult but not impossible given advances with DNA and other technology.

"It's quite possible my brother isn't even among any of those" buried on Long Island, she told the AP. "Nevertheless, it was something we didn't know about until this story came out."

Pentagon officials say the process of identifying the remains of unknown service members must meet strict protocols, and in the case of the Turner, it can't begin until certain key documents, including those containing a sailor's dental information, are found. They noted that the effort is also hampered by the lack of records for any of the 70 unknowns buried at the Long Island cemetery.

Todd S. Livick Sr., a the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency spokesman, said in an email that the agency's researchers have spent years searching for files pertaining to the cemetery's burials of unknowns, but so far they've not been located.

"Without these sources of information, DPAA cannot determine whether multiple individuals were buried in the casket or construct a case for disinterment," he said.

According to Darcy, a retired career Marine from Locust Grove, Virginia, who specializes in MIA cases, the Agency hasn't done enough for the fallen Turner sailors.

"These guys died for their country," he said. "They deserve to be buried properly and the families deserve the closure."

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Learn more about our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Copyright 2017 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Spillway On California Dam In Danger Of Collapse, Evacuations Ordered

By Dan Whitcomb

Reuters, February 12, 2017

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

Evacuation Ordered As Oroville Dam's Auxiliary Spillway Predicted To Fail

Communities evacuated along Northern California's Feather River downstream of Lake Oroville

By Jim Carlton

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Yale Renames Calhoun College Because Of Historic Ties To White Supremacy And Slavery

By Monica Wang

Washington Post, February 11, 2017

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Yale University will rename one of its residential colleges, replacing the name of an alumnus remembered as an advocate of slavery with that of an alumna who was a pioneering mathematician and computer scientist who helped transform the way people use technology.

"The minute that the announcement came out, people stuck their heads out of the window and yelled 'Wahoo!'" said Julia Adams, a sociology professor who is head of the just-renamed Grace Murray Hopper College.

The decision to rename Calhoun College reverses one made last spring, when Yale President Peter Salovey said he did not want to erase history, but confront it and learn from it.

Colleges across the country — as well as other institutions, cities and legislative bodies — have wrestled with similar questions, as they consider monuments to the past in the context of modern life. Racial tensions and protests have intensified those debates in many places, as well as anger from some about "political correctness" forcing schools to whitewash history.

At Harvard Law School, officials replaced a shield that was the family crest of slave owners. At the University of North Carolina, officials renamed a hall that had honored a leader of the Ku Klux Klan. At Princeton, university leaders chose not to remove the name of Woodrow Wilson as protesters had demanded, instead pledging to be transparent about his failings, such as his support for segregation, as well as his achievements leading the university and the country.

Salovey said Saturday that he still believes in the importance of confronting history rather than erasing it. But a committee led by a historian crafted a set of four principles for considering renaming — starting with a strong presumption against it, but establishing a means for evaluating the idea in exceptional circumstances, such as when the principal legacy of the person is fundamentally at odds with the values of the institution.

That was true of U.S. Vice President John C. Calhoun, Salovey said, "a white supremacist, an ardent defender of slavery as 'a positive good,' someone whose views hardened over the course of his life, who died essentially criticizing the Declaration of Independence and its emphasis on all men being created equal …

"I think we can make this change without effacing history. We're not removing evidence of John C. Calhoun from our campus."

By the beginning of the next academic year, the name of alumna Grace Murray Hopper will be added to the building, and the residential college will be known by that name. Students' T-shirts will have the Hopper name. They won't chisel off the "Calhoun" or remove other traces of him on campus. They have removed stained-glass windows from the college — one of which portrayed enslaved people picking cotton — and will display them elsewhere with an explanation of the historical context.

The legacy of Calhoun, who graduated from Yale in 1804 and 1822 and served as a U.S. vice president, secretary of state, secretary of war and senator, becoming an influential champion of slavery, had been debated at the school over the years. But those discussions turned to urgent pleas in 2015 after a white man who revered the Confederacy fatally shot nine black worshipers at a church in Charleston, S.C. That led South Carolina lawmakers to take down the Confederate flag that had long flown at the state Capitol, and efforts at Yale and elsewhere to stop honoring the name of Calhoun and other people associated with slavery and white supremacy.

That fall, protests over racial issues erupted on campus, and Salovey promised changes, including a more diverse faculty and a new center for studies of race and ethnicity. But university leaders resisted demands to drop the Calhoun name.

Last spring, Salovey said in a letter to the campus community that deleting the name "might allow us to feel complacent or, even, self-congratulatory. … Retaining the name forces us to learn anew and confront one of the most disturbing aspects of Yale's and our nation's past. I believe this is our obligation as an educational institution."

But in August, he asked a committee to establish principles to guide university leaders when considering renaming. They concluded with four things to think about: Whether the principal legacy of the person is fundamentally at odds with the university's mission; whether that legacy was debated during the person's life; why the person was honored by the university; and whether the building has an important role in creating community on campus.

"In considering these principles," Salovey said in a letter to the university Saturday, "it became clear that Calhoun

College presents an exceptionally strong case — perhaps uniquely strong — that allows it to overcome the powerful presumption against renaming."

He quoted another graduate — the namesake of another residential college at Yale — who denounced Calhoun's legacy even as he mourned his death, writing that he "in a great measure changed the state of opinion and the manner of speaking and writing upon this subject in the South, until we have come to present to the world the mortifying and disgraceful spectacle of a great republic — and the only real republic in the world — standing forth in vindication of slavery, without prospect of, or wish for, its extinction. If the views of Mr. Calhoun, and of those who think with him, are to prevail, slavery is to be sustained on this great continent forever."

Salovey said: "This principal legacy of Calhoun — and the indelible imprint he has left on American history — conflicts fundamentally with the values Yale has long championed. Unlike other namesakes on our campus, he distinguished himself not in spite of these views but because of them."

A group of advisers asked to consider the issue unanimously concluded that the name should be changed, and the Yale Corporation voted Friday in agreement.

The Corporation considered alternatives from a shortlist of the hundreds of names recommended by many students, alumni, faculty and others, and chose Grace Murray Hopper, who had been endorsed by the most people as reflective of Yale's core values.

Adams, who said students rushed to her house to celebrate as soon as the announcement was made, credited students with having an effect on not just the Hopper name but also on one of the new residential colleges slated to open in the fall, which honors black civil rights activist Pauli Murray.

Adams said she was delighted at Hopper's name as well. "She was an amazing woman — her work in the sciences, her dedication to her country through serving in the military, her personal wit and so many things about her make her an absolutely wonderful choice."

Elisia Ceballo-Countryman, a junior, was celebrating the name change with fellow students in Hopper College on Saturday afternoon, but she said she was disappointed in the way the Yale administration handled a "long, drawn-out and exhausting" renaming process. She said the college should have honored a black person given the history of racism attached to the Calhoun name.

Senior Lindsey Hogg said that during the debates about Calhoun, she had advocated for Henry Roe Cloud, the first Native American to graduate from Yale. Another popular option was Roosevelt Thompson, an African American graduate of Yale known for his academic achievements and dedication to public service. But Hogg, like many other students, said she was excited about Hopper. "No matter how you look at this, it's a win," she said. "Yale did the right thing, finally."

She said she was proud to be in the first class to graduate with the Hopper name. An email from Jonathan Holloway, the dean of Yale College, to students Saturday afternoon said the official name change will be July 1, but that students were welcome to begin using the new name immediately. School officials will be talking about how to proceed with the name change through the diploma ceremony this spring, he said. Calhoun College alumni can change their affiliation to Hopper if they wish, or retain the Calhoun name.

Students are randomly assigned to one of a dozen, soon to be 14, residential colleges at Yale, which create smaller communities and often strongly held identities within the large research university. So the name itself, while symbolic, has a depth of meaning and enduring memories connected with it for many students and graduates.

Max Walden, a Yale graduate student in the history department, opposes the name change. "I'm not of the camp that's trying to keep the name on the merits of Calhoun the man," he said. "It's on the merits of historical rigor and taking the long view, because we ourselves will be subject to the kind of judgment that Calhoun is undergoing right now."

Walden said that as a university community, Yale should be taking a rigorous and intellectual view of Calhoun's legacy and confronting the past instead of scrubbing the name and caving into current political pressure.

As a historian, Walden believes that attitudes toward the past change throughout time — in the 1930s, he said, Calhoun's principal legacy was one of public service to his country, and his defense of slavery came as a secondary concern when Yale decided to honor him; today, his principal legacy is undoubtedly tied to racism and slavery.

Walden worries that the administration is initiating a process of questioning principal legacies that will affect many namesakes currently on campus.

He pointed to the Schwarzman Center, a student center named after billionaire alumnus Stephen A. Schwarzman that will open in 2020, as an example. A hundred years from now, Walden said students might look back at the community's decision to honor Schwarzman today and view Schwarzman's legacy of "grotesque wealth and contributions to economic inequality" with disgust.

Holloway, who served on the committee that determined the principles for consideration of renaming, said Saturday they were very clear that times change and sensitivities change. "Just as we look back at the decision in the 1930s to name the college after Calhoun with bewilderment," he said, they recognize that at some point in the future, people could say of the decision to change the name, "'What were they thinking?'"

FOIA CBP 000928

Over time, he said, "the notion of who's a Yalie has changed radically," with a student body far more diverse in every way. "We need to be aware of that. Not to say we must always change with the wind blowing different directions, not at all. We just need to be mindful of the significance of these changes. At some point there may be an overwhelming sense that something is out of sync with our foundational values."

He said he's happy to have the decision made so that people can move on. Hopper was a great choice that people will celebrate, he said — but he's also bracing for messages from some prominent alumni who have opposed the change "who are going to go berserk about this."

Kica Matos, director of immigrant rights and racial justice for the Center for Community Change, one of four New Haven activists arrested in a Change the Name rally Friday, said: "For those of us who put our bodies on the line yesterday, today feels like a sweet vindication. We are just happy that Calhoun's name will no longer disgrace the city and the university."

Salovey, in an interview, said he was thrilled by the choice of Hopper, who earned her doctorate in mathematics and mathematical physics from Yale in 1934. She left her teaching role at Vassar during World War II to enlist in the U.S. Navy, using math to fight fascist enemies. Her work on the earliest computers and computer languages made it possible to write programs for multiple machines simultaneously, to use word-based languages allowing non-specialists to use computers for the first time and dramatically expanding the ways computers could be used.

She was a co-inventor of the business language COBOL.

Hopper was recalled to active service in the Navy at the age of 60, and retired as a rear admiral when she was 79. She was honored many times, including posthumously with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In his letter to the campus community, Salovey called her a visionary, and wrote, "At a time when computers were bulky machines limited to a handful of research laboratories, Hopper understood that they would one day be ubiquitous, and she dedicated her long career to ensuring they were useful, accessible, and responsive to human needs."

Her principal legacy, he said, "is all around us. … Grace Murray Hopper College thus honors her spirit of innovation and public service while looking fearlessly to the future."

When she died in 1992, her obituary in The Washington Post noted she had a very strong dislike of intellectual conventions, symbolized by a clock in her office in the Naval Data Automation Command that ran counterclockwise. She once told a reporter, "'the only phrase I've ever disliked is, 'Why, we've always done it that way.'

"'I always tell young people, go ahead and do it. You can always apologize later.'"

The Supreme Court's Controversial Ruling On An Executive Order

By Avi Selk

Washington Post, February 12, 2017

The documents would expose everything: the racism inherent in the president's executive order, the cynical politics behind it, the lies told in court to defend it.

Peter Irons was sure of this. The lawyer had stumbled across the papers in a government storeroom: secret admissions from U.S. officials that a supposed matter of national security was not what it appeared.

The executive order led to abrupt expulsions, mass detentions and the persecution of thousands on the basis of their ethnicity, but it was false to the core.

Irons intended to prove it. But he could not do it by himself.

With the documents in hand and a knot in his stomach, he stepped out of a taxi in San Leandro, Calif., in 1982 and walked up to Fred Korematsu's house.

Irons knew the man only by reputation. Long ago, Korematsu had been arrested in this city, his home town, for defying an executive order that led to the expulsion or imprisonment of more than 100,000 Japanese Americans after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

Korematsu had gone to court to fight it, much as others now oppose President Trump's executive order barring people from seven majority-Muslim countries from entering the United States.

Korematsu lost, in 1944, in the Supreme Court. Defeat changed him. For decades, he had been living quietly in a small house, refusing to discuss his case with anyone, even his children, blaming himself for what his government did to his people.

It had taken Irons two letters and a phone call just to get an audience in Korematsu's living room. Now he sat across from the man, nervous, hoping that seeing incriminating documents the government had kept secret during his trial would convince him to fight again.

Korematsu was a quiet man. He sat in his chair, puffed on his pipe and read Irons's papers in total silence.

"At least 20 minutes passed without a single word being said," Irons recalled. "Then he looked over at me."

"He said: 'Would you be my lawyer?'"

Today, more than 30 years after he convinced Korematsu to challenge, for the second time, what is widely considered one of the most unjust government actions in U.S. history, Irons is closely watching another legal battle.

He watches the State of Washington and State of Minnesota v. Trump — another "poorly conceived, hastily executed, blanket dragnet," as he sees it. And others do, too.

"The Trump executive order assumed people are dangerous because they're Muslims, from Muslim-specific

FOIA CBP 000929

countries," said Erwin Chemerinsky, who is dean of the law school at the University of California at Irvine and once called the Supreme Court's ruling against Korematsu "one of the worst decisions in history."

"That's the fundamental flaw in both Korematsu and the Trump executive order," Chemerinsky said. "To assume people are dangerous because of their race."

As a young man in San Leandro, Korematsu once had a surgeon cut a bit of flesh from his eyelids — to look less Japanese, less suspicious to his neighbors.

It didn't work.

He was not yet 23 on the day Japanese war planes killed more than 2,000 at Pearl Harbor.

Two months later, as he began to fight a world war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order that led to the roundup and imprisonment of every Japanese American on the West Coast.

Korematsu's parents and siblings reported to military officials, who took them from their home to live in converted horse pens while permanent internment camps were constructed in other states.

Korematsu refused to go.

"My father was not a complicated man," said Karen Korematsu. "He had learned about the Constitution in high school. He thought he had civil rights as an American citizen."

So he made up a fake name and laid low in a rooming house. He lasted only a few weeks before he was spotted and arrested.

A director for the American Civil Liberties Union visited Korematsu in jail. Roosevelt's order was popular in polls at the time, but the ACLU thought a judge would agree it was wrong.

"My father really believed that," Karen Korematsu said. "He thought, certainly, the Supreme Court would think this was unconstitutional."

Korematsu did not get to see much of his case as he was shuffled from jail to jail, then to an internment camp.

His daughter said some other Japanese prisoners looked down on him for causing a stir.

When the case reached the country's highest court, one Supreme Court judge strongly agreed with Korematsu — writing that his federal conviction for merely staying home "falls into the ugly abyss of racism."

But most did not. "Korematsu was not excluded from the Military Area because of hostility to him or his race," the court ruled. "The military urgency of the situation demanded that all citizens of Japanese ancestry be segregated from the West Coast temporarily."

Korematsu learned he'd lost by letter, before being allowed to return to California. "He was disappointed and disgusted," said Karen Korematsu.

So much so that for the first 16 years of her life, her father never told her who he was.

A poster went up in Karen's junior high school every anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Her classmates, she remembered, would take the opportunity to tell her to go back to Japan.

The idea seemed strange to her. Her mother wasn't even Japanese, and her father had never set foot in the country.

In fact, she said, the Asian community in the Bay area seemed to hold her father in low opinion.

One day at school, a classmate gave a book report about Japanese American internment during the war.

"I said, 'That's interesting. I'd never heard about that before,'" Karen Korematsu said.

Her classmate went on — about "this one man that resisted and disobeyed and it ended up to be a landmark Supreme Court case."

Karen heard her father's name, but figured it unlikely. He was a low-paid draftsman, known as a pushover at the office, hardly a legal icon.

When her father came home from work that evening, Karen asked him about it.

"He said, simply, it happened a long time ago," she said. "And what he did, he felt was right. And the government was wrong."

The pain in her father's face told her not to ask again.

And then years later, when she was grown, Karen Korematsu came home one day in 1982 to find her father sitting in his living room with a lawyer named Peter Irons and a stack of old papers.

Irons, who was also a political scientist at the University of California at San Diego, had come across the documents while researching a book.

In mislabeled boxes belonging to the Justice Department, he had discovered memos never seen during Korematsu's Supreme Court trial.

In one, the general who ordered the internments wrote how the "racial characteristics" of Japanese people made them inherently less loyal.

In another, a naval intelligence officer estimated that fewer than 3 percent of the Japanese population might be saboteurs.

"I thought, 'My God, there's probably a lawsuit here,'" Irons recalled.

So he rounded up three Japanese Americans who had fought their internments at the Supreme Court. The first two were eager for a rematch. And hard as he'd been to track down, Korematsu was game, too.

"My father never gave up hope that some day he could reopen his case," Karen Korematsu said. "He carried that burden all those years."

As the case proceeded, more about the Japanese internment program was being revealed to the country. A document declassified since World War II contained an

FOIA CBP 000930

admission that the program was designed in part to appease "public morale," The Washington Post has previously reported.

A congressional panel ruled in 1983 that "race prejudice, war hysteria and the failure of political leadership" prompted the detentions.

Korematsu's had missed the end of his Supreme Court case in 1944, having been interned along with other Japanese Americans from the coast. But as a federal judge read out her decision in November 1983, Korematsu sat in a packed courtroom.

Irons sat beside him. Men and women who had been imprisoned like Korematsu sat all around.

By then, not even the government would defend Korematsu's conviction.

"Apparently the government would like this court to set aside the conviction without looking at the record in an effort to put this unfortunate episode in our country's history behind us," U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel wrote in her decision.

She refused. Without ruling on the merit of Irons's documents, she told the courtroom the government's position was "tantamount to a confession of error."

"There was a complete silence for several seconds as people took this in," Irons recalled. "Then people erupted, cheering, clapping, crying."

They rushed up to hug Korematsu — at age 63, a pariah and convict no more.

In the remaining years of his life, until his death at age 86, Korematsu would hear apologies from U.S. presidents. He would receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Bill Clinton. He would be not so quiet — sometimes even making a speech. And his name would sometimes be invoked when someone felt the government was again casting blanket suspicion on innocent people.

"The extreme nature of the government's position is all-too-familiar," reads Korematsu's 2003 brief to the Supreme Court, arguing against the imprisonment without trial of people at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The court would later restore rights to the prisoners.

But with these victories, Karen Korematsu said, come new threats.

She hears echoes of her father's old warnings in the way Trump's order casts suspicion on an entire class of people, and the way its defenders in court make claim to national security without citing any evidence against the people the order affects.

She is reminded that during the campaign, Trump promised a broader ban on Muslim foreigners — as well as a registry of Muslims living in the United States.

She is reminded that one of his top backers cited her father's case — which has never been overturned despite his exoneration — as legal precedent for such things.

"The Supreme Court case still stands," Karen Korematsu said. "It's been discredited, but this was always my father's greatest fear."

Trump's Harder Line On Mexico Casts Shadow On Long-Term Growth Picture

Investment slowdown, peso weakening and higher interest rates

By Robbie Whelan

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Denim Dilemma

By Julie Wernau

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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

Here's One Industry Where The U.S. Is Already Catching China—Fertilizers

Low gas prices are the key factor in a surge in U.S. fertilizer output

By Lucy Craymer In Hong Kong And Rhiannon Hoyle In Sydney

Wall Street Journal, February 12, 2017

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